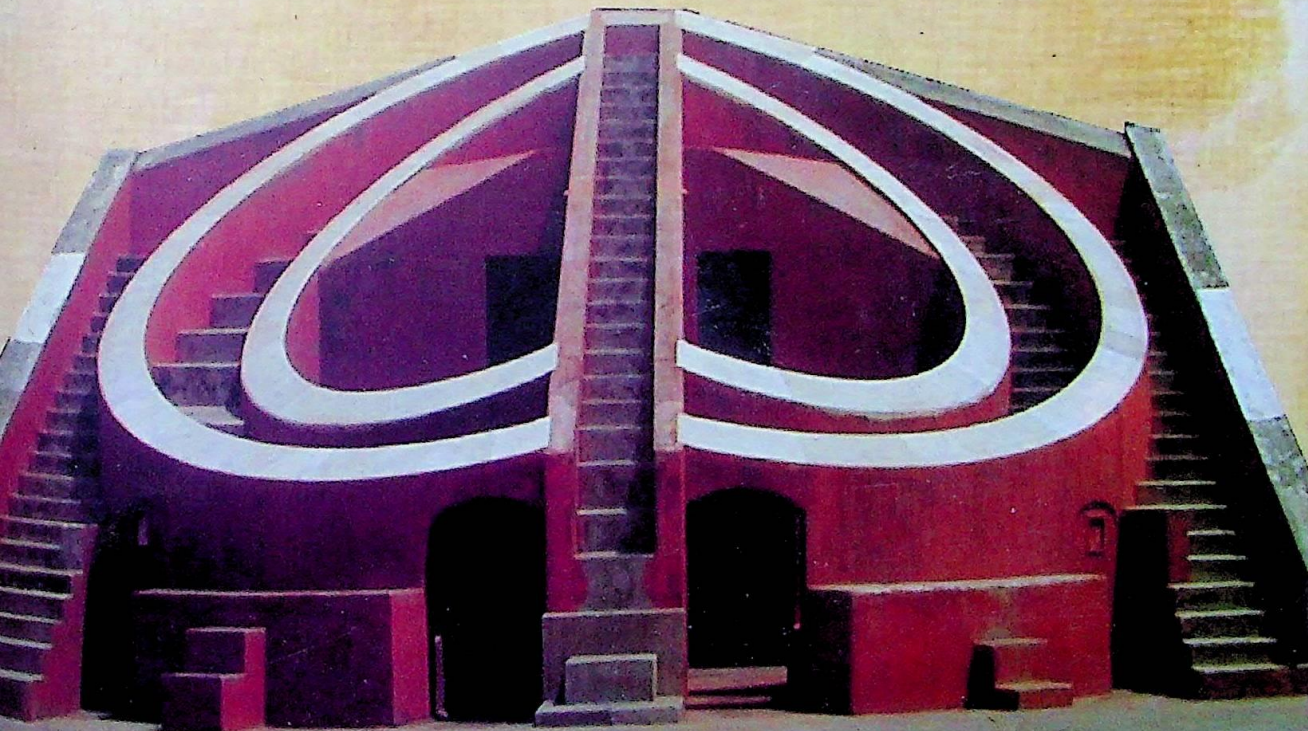


# The India They Saw

Foreign Accounts : 18<sup>th</sup>-Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century

*Edited by*  
**Meenakshi Jain**





In the wake of the commercial and political expansion of Europe in the eighteenth century, there was a remarkable increase in the number of Europeans visiting India, not merely for trade but also in search of her fabled ancient wisdom. The European rediscovery of India's cultural heritage led to the emergence of Orientalist scholarship and a belief that India was the original home of the arts and sciences.

In India the great patron of Indic studies was the Governor-General, Warren Hastings. He gathered around himself a select group that included Charles Wilkins, Nathaniel Halhed, and William Jones, the most famous of the Orientalists.

But the growing political ascendancy of the British in India dampened the early exuberance for Indic studies. As conquerors, the British began to feel the need to justify their conquests and exalt their own race and religion. Several other forces were at work to turn the tide against India. The Industrial Revolution in England had created the need to convert India into a market for machine-made British goods. Meanwhile, the Evangelicals pressed for the Christianization and Anglicization of India, which, they felt, would lead to permanent British rule and also change Indian lifestyle to the advantage of British manufacturers. The Evangelicals allied with the Utilitarians to launch a tirade against Indian culture and force the retreat of the Orientalists.

This volume covers the period from A.D. 1700 to 1850. A significant number of travellers visited India during this century and a half. The accounts available to us are primarily those written in English. A considerable amount of the work in French and the rich accounts of the early Danish missionaries on the Coromandel Coast, for instance, have yet to be translated into English.











# **The India They Saw**

**Foreign Accounts : 18<sup>th</sup>-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

*(Volume IV)*







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## Publisher's Note

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In the year 2004, on returning from South East Asia, Nobel Prize recipient, Sir Vidia Naipaul requested us to arrange a meeting with a group of Delhi based thinkers to share the impressions of his visit. He was simply overwhelmed with what he saw in South East Asian countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia etc. We hurriedly, invited about twenty people to a get together with Sir Vidia. The meeting held on June 15, 2004 was attended by Sarva Shri Dinanath Mishra, Balbir Punj, Brij Kishore Sharma, Shankar Saran, Meenakshi Jain, Sandhya Jain, Ram Madhav, Devendra Swarup and some others. Sir Vidia described how he was astonished to see deep Indian cultural influence in the region not only in the past but even today. He felt sad that present day Indians appeared to have little recollection of the grandeur of their ancient civilization and its lasting contribution to the world civilization. He felt strongly that it would be a worth while endeavour to prepare a compendium of foreign perceptions of India down the ages.

During later discussions, it was decided that the project would cover the period from earliest times up to the mid-nineteenth century, the changed sensibility towards India thereafter consequent to the establishment of the British Colonial rule, being well known. The present volumes are the result of these deliberations.

We are thankful to Sandhya Jain and Meenakshi Jain for agreeing to take up the project despite their other professional commitments and completing it so meticulously. We are grateful to Prof. Devendra Swarup for having agreed to coordinate the project till its fruition. Sandhya Jain compiled and edited the material for the first volume, while Meenakshi Jain prepared the remaining three volumes. Both of them have recorded their experiences and impressions in detailed Introductions to their respective volumes separately.

We wish to place on record our heartfelt gratefulness to Sir Vidia for not only conceiving the project, but also for painstakingly going through volumes I and III and making many valuable suggestions which the editors have attempted to incorporate. We feel indebted to Prof. Lokesh Chandra and Dr. B.M. Pande for their valuable contribution in the preparation of the first volume. We are



highly grateful to Prof. Devendra Swarup, without whose continuous active guidance and involvement, this ambitious project would not have seen the light of the day.

We are conscious that many other compilations of foreign accounts on India are already available, but we do feel that this series of four volumes will add much to the present knowledge of our readers in this area and also pave the way for publication of many other volumes based on the first hand study of the original sources in foreign languages other than English as, it was painfully discovered during the preparation of these volumes that most of the material still lies untranslated into English, which is the only window available to most of the Indian Scholars. With this Note, we offer these volumes to our readers and cordially invite their comments and suggestions, which would help us to improve the quality of the later editions.



## Introduction

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In the wake of the commercial and political expansion of Europe in the eighteenth century, there was a remarkable increase in the number of Europeans visiting India, not merely for trade but also in search of her fabled ancient wisdom. For the rising middle classes of Europe, India increasingly came to embody not merely a principal source of their economic prosperity, but "a symbol of the re-discovered human soul." Philosophers, scholars and poets were repulsed by the "provincialism" of Europe, which they considered a rather insignificant appendage to Asia. The European rediscovery of India's cultural heritage led to the emergence of Orientalist scholarship and a belief that India, not Egypt, was the original home of the arts and sciences.

From the early eighteenth century missionaries also became active in India. A German Protestant mission was established at Tranquebar, a small Danish colony on the Coromandel Coast, in 1706 by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg. He was succeeded by Benjamin Schultze, who completed the translation of the Old Testament in Tamil begun by his predecessor. Barely fifty miles from Tranquebar, the Jesuits set up their own mission under the Italian, Costanzo Beschi, who arrived in India in 1710 and stayed till his death in 1747. The Protestants and Jesuits engaged in frequent disputes on how best to spread Christianity in India. However, the general shift of political power to the British in South India saw the eventual retreat of the Jesuits and the growing influence of the German Protestants who came under the wings of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in London.

### French interest

Meanwhile three important centres of Indic studies emerged in Europe – France, England and Germany. The new interest in the East manifested itself first in France as a quest for original texts in various languages and their exact translations. In 1727, the French Royal Librarian, the Abbe Bignon, resolved to enrich the royal collection with oriental works. Etienne Fourmont's *Memoire*, written that year, gave a precise account of the texts to be acquired. Among



those particularly sought were “the main Indian works on Indian chronology, the history of their kings, the religion and customs.” There was, additionally, a demand for books on geography and medicine, as well as dictionaries and grammars. Indian texts were then a rarity in Europe. Accordingly, the French Governor-General in Pondicherry, Lenoir, was instructed to assist in the acquisition of manuscripts.

Lenoir entrusted the work to French Jesuit missionaries in India, who had been engaged in a systematic study of Indian languages. They had already completed voluminous Tamil and Sanskrit dictionaries. A French Capuchin monk, Francois-Marie de Tours, who lived in the Chandernagor “Thibet Mission,” had authored a Hindustani dictionary that had been deposited with the *Propaganda* in Rome in 1704.

The Governor-General and the Jesuit Father, Le Gac, reached an agreement whereby the Compagnie des Indes (to be reimbursed by the King of France) would provide the requisite funds and paper, and two copies made of every manuscript, one for the Royal Library in France, the other for the Pondicherry Jesuit Mission.

As a result, 287 Indian texts reached Paris between A.D. 1729 and 1735, to constitute the Bibliotheque nationale’s earliest Indian collection. Among them was a complete *Rig Veda* in *Grantha* characters, which arrived in the French capital in 1731. In 1732, Father Pons sent 168 books from Chandernagore that included several Sanskrit grammars and dictionaries, numerous works on mythology, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, poetry, laws, customs, worship, and twenty-five *Puranas*. At about the same time, Tamil and Telugu grammars, a Telugu-French dictionary and a Telugu-Sanskrit dictionary came from Karnataka. By 1736, Paris possessed several copies of the *Bhagavata Purana*, a *Mahabharata* in seventeen volumes, the ‘*Book of Manu*’, various *Upanishads*, a *Rig-Veda* on palm leaves, and several *Ramayanas*, among other texts.

In 1740, Father Jean Francois Pons presented an account of the studies conducted by the Jesuits, which was published in Part XXVI of the *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses* in 1743. In a well-known letter of 23 November 1740, Father Pons professed his admiration of Sanskrit and a philosophy he called “*philosophie morale*,” that he had encountered in discussions with people in India. Father Pons made a preliminary analysis of indigenous books on grammar. He translated one of them, along with the *Amarakosha*, the best-known of the eighteen dictionaries he was familiar with.

The Jesuit Hanxleden, who resided at the Malabar mission from 1699 till his death in 1732, had probably been the first European to write a Sanskrit grammar in Latin for his own use and to attempt a dictionary. In the second half of the eighteenth century, an Austrian Carmelite, Paulinus a Sancto



Bartholomaeo, collected some important linguistic and theological works. The first Sanskrit grammar *printed* in Europe (in Rome in 1790) was in fact that of Bartholomaeo.

Besides the Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries, there were other Frenchmen active and interested in India. Guillaume le Gentil and M. Bailly, for instance, were engrossed in the astronomical observations of the Hindus. Several Frenchmen were in service in the Indian states, and some of their manuscript collections also eventually found their way to France. In India, the two main centres of French interest in Indian culture were Lucknow (1757-1800) and the Sikh kingdom of Punjab (1822-1849).

The Bibliotheque nationale obtained three important collections that belonged to Anquetil-Duperron, Jean-Baptiste Gentil and Antoine-Louis Polier. Anquetil-Duperron, the great scholar and explorer, arrived in India 1754 in search of the *Zend Avesta*, and the complete *Vedas* as well as the means of reading them. While in Bengal, he obtained from M. Gentil a copy of the *Oupanek'hat*, the Persian translation of the *Upanishads* that had been undertaken by the Mughal Prince, Dara, in the previous century.

In 1771, Anquetil-Duperron published his translation of the *Zend Avesta* in French, which he also translated into Latin. This was the first approach to an Asian text wholly autonomous of Biblical and Classical traditions. In 1786, Anquetil-Duperron presented his translation of the *Upanishads* from the Persian text prepared by Dara. Anquetil-Duperron was an admirer of Indian civilization as was evident from his *Inde en rapport avec l'Europe* (1798). He had done considerable work in Sanskrit by the time of his death, and also left some work on Malabar and Telugu. He gave one hundred and eighty Indian manuscripts to the Royal Library, which he had gathered between 1758-9 and 1761.

His compatriot, Jean-Baptiste Gentil, also collected manuscripts and paintings while in India. His collection, which he donated to the Bibliotheque royale on his return to France, consisted of one hundred and thirty-three volumes. It was assembled between 1757 and 1775. While in India, Jean-Baptiste Gentil had married an Indian girl from whom he had a son.

Another Frenchman, Antoine-Louis Polier, arrived in India in 1758 and stayed on for thirty years. He was permitted to copy the *Vedas* by the Raja of Jaipur, which he did in eleven in-folio volumes, now in the British Museum. Polier lent his set of the *Vedas* to Sir William Jones, who kept them for a year in his private library. Polier also studied Sikh religion and history and possessed a copy of the *Adi Granth*. His *Mythologie des Indous* was published posthumously in 1809. He was one of the first Europeans to take an interest in Indian music and dance. William Jones, in his correspondence, was ecstatic at Polier's discovery of the *Ragavibodha* of Sumanatha, and at his lending him (Jones) his own manuscript.



Between 1768 and 1781, the Frenchman, Pierre de Sonnerat, a learned student of the botanist, Philibert Commerson, made several trips to the East Indies and India. He, too, came in search of the *Vedas*, but was unsuccessful in his venture. Sonnerat's *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, published in 1782, attested to his appreciation of Indian civilization. He placed the inception of wisdom in India and wrote that it gave religions and laws to all other peoples and that the Egyptians and Greeks were indebted to it.

Much information on India was collected from 1730 to 1789. By the time of the French Revolution, the Bibliotheque nationale had one of the richest collections of Indian manuscripts in Europe. Many Frenchmen in India also had oriental libraries, including Pierre de Bruey, the French Resident at Surat, Claude Martin at Lucknow, and Raymond (Lamaka). Indeed Frenchmen of varied origins and professions demonstrated significant curiosity about India.

French intellectuals also focused on a 'scientific' analysis of Indian history. In 1772, Joseph de Guignes, indirectly aided by the talented Tamil scholar Maridas Pillai, interpreter for the Compagnie des Indes at Pondicherry, discovered the link between Chandragupta and Sandracottus, a breakthrough commonly attributed to Sir William Jones. French thinkers also debated on the reasons for India's defeat first by Islam and subsequently by European powers.

Frenchmen used authentic (and sometimes, unknowingly, fake) Indian texts for their philosophical speculations and philological studies. Their studies led them to the theory of kinship between Indian and European languages. In 1767, after thirty-five years of field research in India, the Jesuit missionary, Father Coeurdoux (1691-1779), a pioneer in comparative grammar, aided by Maridas Pillai discovered the linguistic links of Greek and Latin to Sanskrit. His findings were, however, published only in 1808, after William Jones' work on the subject had been widely read in Europe.

Indic studies convinced French scholars of the need to jettison Judeo-Christian conceptions of time. The de-Christianization of history and the weakening hold of Biblical revelation were among the unanticipated consequences of the introduction of Indian and Chinese cultures to Europe. Perhaps conscious of this fallout, Father Coeurdoux in Pondicherry had, before 1772, prepared a text demonstrating the possibility of reconciling Biblical data and Indian history. He also wrote on Hindu manners and customs. (It has lately been alleged that Abbe Dubois (1765-1848) found a copy of this work in Pondicherry and, after some modifications, gave it to the British official, Mark Wilks, as his manuscript in 1806. Wilks forwarded the manuscript to Fort St. George with the recommendation that it be purchased by the East India Company, which it was in 1808. In 1816, an English translation was published under Wilks' supervision.)



### Voltaire launches India

In a sense Voltaire (1694-1778) could be said to have launched India in Europe. He first presented his views on India in the *Essai sur les mœurs*, which were elaborated in the 1750s as more writings began to appear, especially those of the Englishmen, J.Z. Holwell, and Alexander Dow. Voltaire stated that the arrival of India had enabled him to correct the view of J.B. Bossuet, according to whose world history, "everything in the world was done for the sake of the Jewish nation." Voltaire said that henceforth the balance in favour of India and China, the real elders of the family of mankind, would be restored.

He wrote to his friend, Jean Sylvain Bailly, the future mayor of revolutionary France, "Everything came to us from the Ganges, astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc." Further, "our religion was hidden deep in India" and "incontestably comes to us from the Brahmans." Alluding to the Anglo-French rivalry in India which resulted in three Carnatic wars between 1740 and 1761, Voltaire stated, "Our nations have mutually destroyed each other on that very soil where we went to collect nothing but money, and where the first Greeks travelled for nothing but knowledge."

### British contribution

A significant section of early Englishmen in India also found in Indian culture "a deep and appealing wisdom." John Z. Holwell (1711-1798), in his *Interesting Historical Events, relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan* (1767), declared that "the world does not now contain annals of more indisputable antiquity than those delivered down by the ancient Brahmins." He avowed that the people "from the earliest times have been an ornament to the creation if so much can with propriety be said of any known people upon earth."

Alexander Dow (1735-1779), author of the three-volume *The History of Hindostan* (1770), stated that the primeval truths of the Hindus owed nothing to Jews or Christians. "The Brahmins," he declared, "contrary to the ideas formed of them in the west, invariably believe in the unity, eternity, omniscience and omnipotence of God: that the polytheism of which they have been accused, is no more than a symbolical worship of the divine attributes..." Further, "The system of religion which they profess is only perfectly known in the effect which it has upon the manners of the people. Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered... Revolution and change are things unknown; and assassinations and conspiracies never exists. Penal laws are scarce known among the Hindoos; for their motives to bad actions are few... it is to the ingenuity of the Hindoos, we owe all the fine manufactures in the East."

The Glasgow historian, William Robertson, in his *An Historical*



*Disquisition Concerning Ancient India* (1791) stated, "Many facts have been transmitted to us, which, if they are examined with proper attention, clearly demonstrate that the natives of India were not only more early civilised, but had made greater progress in civilization than any other people..." It was from their ancient writings, he said, that they derived "the most liberal sentiments which they entertain at present, and the wisdom for which they are now celebrated has been transmitted to them from ages very remote."

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, following the British ascendancy in Bengal, individual efforts to acquire access to Indian philosophy and literature were replaced by the systematic endeavours of a number of officials of the East India Company. Learning became directly linked to the requirements of administration. The concerted efforts to amass and interpret local laws and customs stabilized British authority and aided further expansion.

The great patron of Indic studies was the Governor-General, Warren Hastings. As a result of his appeal, Brahmins versed in the *Shastras* gathered at Fort William and drafted a comprehensive treatise on Indic law. This was subsequently translated into Persian and, in 1776, into English by Nathaniel Halhed as *A Code of Gentoo Laws*. Halhed also published a Bengali grammar.

With Hastings' backing Charles Wilkins, who joined the East India Company in 1770, engaged in the study of Sanskrit. Wilkins had been the first to discover, and in 1778 to use, methods of engraving, casting, and setting Bengali characters for printing. In 1784, he translated the *Bhagavad Gita*, the first translation in a European language directly from a Sanskrit text. This was followed, in 1787, with a translation of the *Hitopadesha*.

The year 1783 saw the arrival of Sir William Jones to India. In 1784, the Asiatic Society was founded, and after Hastings refused its presidency, Jones selected for the post. In 1788, the journal, *Asiatic Researches*, was started, which was to exercise considerable influence on intellectual circles in Europe. In 1789, came Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*, which went through five reprints in England between 1790 and 1807. In 1792, appeared his translation of the *Gita Govinda*, the poem of mystic love that deeply affected the first German Romantics. In 1794, Jones's *Institutes of Hindu Law* was posthumously published (it was completed by H.T. Colebrooke). Its French translation (*Laws of Manu* or *Manava Dharmashastra*), appeared in 1833 and the German translation in 1837. It was through this work that Indian cosmogony became widely known in Europe. The Frenchman, Joseph Guigniaut wrote, "The cosmogony of the *Manava Dharmashastra* is the broadest and most comprehensive we have thus far encountered."

Henry T. Colebrooke arrived in India in 1783, the same year as William Jones. His *Digest of Hindu Law* was published in 1797. Colebrooke was the first systematic expounder of Indian philosophy and was appointed Professor



of Sanskrit and Hindu law at Fort William College in 1801. In 1805, his paper on the *Vedas* was published in the eighth volume of *Asiatic Researches*. His *Essays on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus*, written after thirty years of study and experience, was widely read in scholarly circles in Europe. After thirty-eight years in India, Colebrooke returned to England in 1815.

The last of this group, H.H. Wilson, arrived in India in 1808. Wilson translated *Megha Duta; or Cloud Messenger* in 1813 and in 1819 presented the first practical Sanskrit-English dictionary. He subsequently also published a translation of the *Vishnu Purana* and the first book of the *Rig Veda*.

But the growing political ascendancy of the British in India dampened the early exuberance for Indic studies, though discoveries continued to be made in numismatics, epigraphy and archeology. The Governor-Generalship of Lord Wellesley made it abundantly clear that the British would soon emerge as the paramount power in the subcontinent. In 1798, the Nizam of Hyderabad was compelled to sign a subsidiary treaty by which his troops were brought under British control and he himself ceased to be an independent ruler. In 1799, the British secured final victory over the state of Mysore. In 1801, Awadh was compelled to cede half its territories to the British. The final breakthrough came with the Second Anglo-Maratha War, in which the British worsted the Marathas in a series of battles across the Deccan and North India. In 1803, the British forces entered Delhi and ousted the Marathas from the imperial capital.

As conquerors, the British began to feel the need to justify their conquests and exalt their own race and religion. It was now also imperative to impart a sense of superiority in young Company officials, who had thus far been getting Brahminized under the spell of Indian literary and cultural traditions. Out of such concerns, Wellesley established the Fort William College at Calcutta in 1800 to train Company officials in India.

Several other forces were at work to turn the tide against India. The Industrial Revolution in England had created the need to convert India into a market for machine-made British goods. Meanwhile, the Evangelicals pressed for the Christianization and Anglicization of India, which, they felt, would lead to permanent British rule and also change Indian lifestyle to the advantage of British manufacturers. The Evangelicals allied with the Utilitarians to launch a tirade against Indian culture and force the retreat of the Orientalists.

In 1825, the Frenchman, Joseph Guigniaut stated that he depended more on German than English works for information on Hindu religion. "These latter are very important," he said, "despite being written, for the most part, from a narrow point of view and a rather unphilosophical spirit. The route mapped by Jones, Robertson, and the learned Thomas Maurice was soon abandoned in England, and the Christian missionaries contributed, through their often tainted picture of the moral and religious state of these people, a great deal to the



diffusion of a host of false ideas about the ancient religion of the Hindus." The German, Wilhelm Schlegel complained to H.H. Wilson in 1827 about the English not taking enough interest in Indian culture. The resistance of the English elite to the revelation of India became pronounced in the 1830s. In 1835, the colonial government also stopped funding the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

It is significant that while the English had founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, just a couple of years after their conquest of Bengal, a chair in Sanskrit was established in England as late as 1833. Also, though William Jones had made a contribution to comparative philology in his oft-quoted address to the Asiatic Society in 1786, the Philological Society was established in London in 1842, well after the discipline had attained maturity in France and Germany.

What accounted for the late renewal of Britain's interest in Indology and the newly emerging disciplines? It appears to have been linked to the nascent German nationalism and the emerging German-French rivalry. Indology played a pivotal role in buttressing German nationalism. The rising German nationalism allied with British imperialism against the common foe, France. The alliance was also dictated by Germany's dependence on England for access to Indian literary works. The arrival of Chevalier Bunsen as ambassador of Prussia to England in 1841 signalled Anglo-German collaboration on the intellectual and political plane. The following year the Philological Society was founded in England, to be followed, in 1843, with the Ethnological Society. Bunsen was instrumental in bringing Max Muller to England, who did much to popularize the Aryan race and invasion theory. Britain used German scholars in an understated manner to further her imperial designs in India.

A view was also developing among a section of British missionaries that Sanskrit could aid in the conversion of high caste Hindus. Colonel Joseph Boden, who established the chair of Sanskrit at Oxford, hoped that the translation of the Bible into Sanskrit would facilitate the evangelization of India.

### **France again**

In the early nineteenth century, France again played a pivotal role in communicating new discoveries to Europe. Paris became the hub of oriental scholarship and attracted researchers from all parts of the world, particularly Germany. In 1803, an officer in the British Navy, Alexander Hamilton, was in Paris where he had come to collate oriental manuscripts at the *Bibliothèque nationale* for an edition of the *Hitopadesha*. Hamilton had lived long in India and married a Bengali woman. While he was in Paris, war broke out between France and England and he was kept a paroled prisoner. During this time he taught Sanskrit, among others, to Constantine Volney, Louis Langles, Claude Fauriel, the Latin scholar Burnouf and the newly arrived German, Friedrich Schlegel.



Among the founders of Indian studies in Germany who studied Sanskrit in Paris may also be mentioned Othmar Frank in 1808 and Franz Bopp in 1813. In 1814, the first European chair of Sanskrit was established in Paris and Leonard de Chezy selected to occupy it. He was succeeded, in 1832, by Burnouf who provided great momentum to the study of Sanskrit and linguistics.

What has been described as an Oriental Renaissance, a second Renaissance, became interchangeable with Indic Renaissance. The term denoted the revival of the atmosphere in the nineteenth century brought about by the arrival of Sanskrit texts in Europe. Arthur Schopenhauer wrote, "Sanskrit literature will be no less influential for our time than Greek literature was in the fifteenth century for the Renaissance."

### Germany

Indology received great impetus in Germany. Indian literature and philosophy came at a time when the German middle class had consciously begun rejecting Latin influences as part of its cultural and social revolt. Till the end of the eighteenth century, French had been the spoken and written language of the educated sections in Germany. But rivalry with France made the German middle class become aware of its own language and civilization. German writers like Johann Herder opposed French influence, and enthusiastically welcomed translations of Indian literary and philosophical works. For Germans, India seemed the epitome of freedom, justice, and natural simplicity which the West had lost long ago. During the 1790s, the impact of oriental studies spread rapidly as the *Laws of Manu*, *Shakuntala*, *Gita Govinda* and *Asiatic Researches* were translated into German.

Germany had no material interests and responded spiritually to India. Friedrich Schlegel, hailed as "the inventor of the Oriental Renaissance," wrote in 1803, "Everything, yes, everything without exception has its origin in India." He proclaimed India with Greece and Germany, the most philosophical of nations. "If one considers," he said, "the superior conception which is at the basis of the truly universal Indian culture and which, itself divine, knows how to embrace in its universality everything that is divine without distinction, then, what we in Europe call religion or what we used to call such, no longer seems to deserve that name. And one would like to advise everyone who wants to see religion, he should, just as one goes to Italy to study art, go to India for that purpose where he may be certain to find at least fragments for which he will surely look in vain in Europe."

Johann Herder was impressed with Anquetil-Duperron's translation of the *Zend Avesta* and himself rendered parts of Charles Wilkins' *Gita* in verse. In 1791, Georg Forster sent him William Jones's version of *Shakuntala*. On its basis, Herder spread among the Romantics the idea of placing the cradle of the



divine infancy of the human race in India. The idea was taken up by his disciple, Friedrich Maier. In 1802, Maier published his complete *Gita* and *Gita Govinda*, which had an extraordinary impact on Romantic circles.

Friedrich Schlegel's *The Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (1808) was the first German contribution to Indology. Friedrich wrote, "May Indic studies find as many disciples and protectors as Germany and Italy saw spring up in such great numbers for Greek studies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and may they be able to do as many things in as short a time. The Renaissance of antiquity promptly transformed and rejuvenated all the sciences; we might add that it rejuvenated and transformed the world. We could even say that the effects of Indic studies, if these enterprises were taken up and introduced into learned circles with the same energy today, would be no less great or far-reaching." In 1818, a chair of Sanskrit was established in Germany.

However, after the fall of Napoleon, political reaction set in all over Europe. There was a preoccupation with the patriotic themes of nationalistic revival on the one hand, and, on the other, with what in literary history is called the Victorian attitude to life. The response of the German mind to India began to be coloured by the same conflict and dualism.

Hegel, who based his conclusions on India on the writings of the English Evangelist, Charles Grant, and the French missionary, Abbe Dubois, stated, "They all agree in one point that there can be nothing more devoid of moral sentiments than the Indian nation." Hegel was of the view that India was not a nation but only a "people," the lowest and most primitive form of social organization. A "state" alone incarnated the "mind" of the people; its history was the history of that all-pervading universal mind. A people who, for whatever reason, had lost their "statehood," had no history of their own.

Hegel and Goethe withdrew from India. Both applied western preconceptions and ideologies to India. Hegel's concept of history and Goethe's concept of beauty were manifestations of a cultural tradition inherently western.

This volume covers the period from A.D. 1700 to 1850. A significant number of travellers visited India during this century and a half. They included astronomers, scientists, naturalists, traders, soldiers of fortune, missionaries, colonial officials and their relatives. The accounts available to us are primarily those written in English. A considerable amount of the work in French and the rich accounts of the early Danish missionaries on the Coromandel Coast, for instance, have yet to be translated into English and hence remain beyond our reach.



## Select List of Travellers and Writers

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(in alphabetical order)

**Anquetil-Duperron** visited India from 1755 to 1761 when he collected Sanskrit texts and Zoroastrian manuscripts.

**Barr, Lieut. William** of the Bengal Horse Artillery accompanied Sir Wade to Peshwar

**Broughton, Thomas D.** (1778-1835) was Military Resident with the Marathas in 1809 and spent a year at the camp of Daulat Rao Sindhia.

**Buchanan, Claudius**, a Scotsman, was appointed chaplain of the East India Company. He arrived in India in 1797.

**Buchanan, Francis** travelled through the territories ruled by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan on the instructions of Lord Wellesley in 1800-1801 to collect information on the state of agriculture and commerce, as well as on arts, religion, manners, customs, history and antiquities of the region.

**Burnell, John** was an Ensign in the East India Company's service at Bombay, from where he wrote at least a part of the "Account" of the island in letters to his father. The first of these is dated May 12, 1710.

**Burton, Richard (1821-1890)** came to India in 1842 and joined the Bombay Native Army. He made an extensive study of Mohammedan life and customs in the Baroda and Sindh Surveys..

**Carey, William** (1761-1834) was a member of the Baptist Missionary Society and arrived in India in 1793.



**Chevalier, Jean-Baptiste** was among the most remarkable French agents in India, known mainly for his diplomatic activities in Bengal when he was Governor of Chandernagore (1767-1778). He made a journey to Assam in 1755.

**Daniell, Thomas and William** were artists who visited India from 1786 to 1794.

**Davidson, C.J.C.** was Lt. Colonel of Engineers, Bengal.

**Deane, Ann** was the wife of Charles Deane, an officer in H.M. 24<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons. She wrote an account of her travels in India from 1804 to 1814.

**De Grandpre, L.** was an officer of the French Army who visited India in 1789.

**Dow, Alexander** was a Scotsman. He was appointed an Ensign in the East India Company's Bengal Army in 1760 and had risen to the rank of Captain at the time of his death in India in 1779.

**Dubois, Abbe** was a French Jesuit who lived in central and south India from 1792 and 1823.

**Duff, Alexander** was a Scottish missionary connected with the Church Missionary Society. He came to Calcutta in 1830.

**Eden, Emily** was the sister of Lord Auckland, who was appointed Governor-General of India in 1835. She and her sister, Fanny, accompanied him to India. They travelled with the Governor-General's party on a long tour of the country which took them to Kanpur, Lucknow, Delhi, Simla and the Sikh kingdom then ruled by Ranjit Singh.

**Eden, Fanny** was the sister of Lord Auckland.

**Elwood, Anne Katherine** was married to Colonel Charles Elwood of the East India Company's Bombay Army. She set out for Bombay in Oct 1825. In 1828, she published an account of her journey and stay in Bombay and her tour of Kutch.

**Elphinstone, Mountstuart** (1779-1859) entered Company service in



1795. He held several important posts in India including that of Governor of Bombay.

**Falkland, Amelia** was the wife of Viscount Falkland, who was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1848. She accompanied him to India, where they stayed till 1853.

**Fay, Eliza** was the wife of the barrister Anthony Fay, who prepared the ground for the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, the first Chief Justice of the old Supreme Court of Calcutta. She arrived in India soon after her marriage in 1779.

**Fenton, Bessie** was born in Ireland and was the first cousin of Sir Henry Lawrence. She married Neil Campbell, a Lieutenant in H.M. 13<sup>th</sup> Foot and came with him to India in 1827.

**Forbes, James** joined the East India Company in 1766, and left India in 1783 after seventeen years of service.

**Forster, George**, in the civil service of the East India Company, traveled through northern India and Afghanistan, Persia, Russia beginning in the year 1782.

**Gardner, Alexander** was appointed Colonel of Artillery in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He died at Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, in 1877.

**Graham, Maria** (later Lady Callcot) was the daughter of Commissioner for Navy in Bombay. She and her brother and sister sailed with him in December 1808. She married Lieutenant Thomas Graham in Bombay in 1809.

**Grant, Charles** was an Evangelist and the first to argue for the Anglicization and Christianization of India. He arrived in India as a servant of the East India Company in 1767 and stayed till 1790. He rose to be a Director of the Company.

**Griffith, William** arrived in Madras in 1832, and immediately received his appointment as Assistant-Surgeon in the service of the East India Company. In 1835 he was attached to the Bengal Presidency, and was selected to form one of a deputation, consisting of Dr. Wallich and himself as botanists, and Mr. MacClelland as geologist, to visit and inspect the Tea-forests (as they were called) of Assam, and to make researches in the natural history of that almost



unexplored district. Thereafter he journeyed over nearly the whole extent of the East India Company's extra-peninsular possessions in pursuit of botanical knowledge.

**Halhed, Nathaniel** was the son of a Director of the Bank of England. He came to India as a Writer of East India Company in 1771. He knew Persian and also claimed to be the first European to be able to conduct the Company's correspondence in Bengali and the first to see the link between Bengali and Sanskrit. He published *Gentoo Code* in 1776 and a *Grammar of the Bengal Language* in 1778. He left India with Warren Hastings in 1785.

**Hamilton, Captain Alexander** travelled, by land and sea, between the Cape of Good-hope and the Island of Japan from 1688 to 1723.

**Heber, Bishop** was the second Bishop of Calcutta. He toured Upper India in the year 1824-1825.

**Hodges, William** was a famous scenery painter. He visited India from 1780 to 1783.

**Holwell, John Z.** was born in Dublin and served as a surgeon in the East India Company's service in Bengal. He was incarcerated in the Black Hole. He briefly became Governor of Bengal in 1760, before he left India. He wrote several works on India, and had a grasp of Bengali and Hindustani and also knew Arabic.

**Hooker, Joseph** was a surgeon, naturalist, traveller and author of several scientific works. He toured the Himalayas between 1847 and 1851. He dedicated his *Himalayan Journals* to his friend Charles Darwin.

**Ives, Edward** (d. 1786) was a surgeon and traveller. He was present at many of the transactions he described (during the years 1755, 1756, 1757) and his personal intimacy with the senior Company official, Watson, gives his historical narrative considerable importance. His account of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and of the products of the country reveal him to be an acute observer.

**Jacquemont, Victor** was a French naturalist who visited India from 1828 to 1831.

**Jones, William** was a classical scholar, a historian, a gifted linguist, who



mastered many European and Asiatic languages. He was appointed judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta in 1783 when he went to India for the first time. An eminent Orientalist, he founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and dominated the intellectual life of the British community in India. Among his major translations were the *Institutes of Hindu Law* and Kalidasa's play *Shakuntala*.

**Kindersley, Jemima** was the wife of Lt.-Col. Nathaniel Kindersley. She was the first English lady to visit Calcutta. She presented a vivid account of life in Calcutta and Allahabad during the years 1765-69.

**Lawrence, Sir Henry** (1806-1857) served as Resident at Lahore from 1846 to 1849, and was appointed President of the Punjab Board of Administration after the annexation of the state in 1849. He played a sterling role in the Revolt of 1857 in which he lost his life.

**Lawrence, Honoria** was the wife of Sir Henry Lawrence whom she married in Calcutta in 1837. She travelled with her husband over large parts of north India and died at Mt Abu in 1854.

**Leonowens, Anna Harriette** (1834-1914) was born in India and lived there till 1856, when she left for Penang.

**Long, Rev. James** (1814-1887), of the Church Missionary Society, arrived in Calcutta in 1840. As a member of the Government Record Commission he was given access to the early records of the East India Company in Bengal.

**Macintosh, William** visited in during the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings.

**Mackenzie, Mrs. Colin** married Captain Colin Mackenzie, a veteran of the First Afghan War and came to India in 1846 where she lived till 1853. She wrote about philanthropic and missionary work in which she was interested.

**Masson, Charles** was an English officer stationed in the Punjab and Afghanistan. He drew attention to Indo-Grecian exchanges in ancient times as revealed by his study of ancient coins.

**Metcalf, Charles** (1785-1846) served as Resident at Delhi (1811-1819; 1825-1827), and Hyderabad (1820-1825) and was Provisional Governor-General of India in 1835-36.



**Mitchell, James** was the purser of the H.M.S. *Harwich* and visited Calcutta in 1747 -1748.

**Moorcroft, William** made the most successful attempt to penetrate into Central Asia from Hindustan. It was made without the encouragement of the Government of India. Moorcroft was the first European to cross the Himalayas. His objective was to penetrate to Turkistan, the country of a breed of horses which he wanted to domesticate in India.

**Mundy, Captain** was aide-de-camp to Lord Combermere, the Commander-in-Chief in India.

**Munro, Thomas** was commissioned in the Indian army in 1780. He served as Governor of Madras from 1820 to 1827.

**Nugent, Maria** was the wife of George Nugent, appointed Commander-in-Chief in India. She arrived with him in 1812. George resigned in 1813 and they returned to England.

**Orlich, Captain Leopold Von**, was a German army officer in pre-mutiny India when Lord Ellenborough was the Governor-General. He came to join the British campaign in Afghanistan but the war was over before he reached India on 6 August 1842. He could only witness the return of the armies. He stayed on and travelled the country which he described as a land of wonders. His account is in the form of letters to two eminent Germans.

**Orme, Robert** arrived in India in 1742 and was appointed a Writer in the Company's civil service. He was promoted to a Factor. He wrote the early history of the East India Company in India up to the year 1762.

**Osborne, William** was Military Secretary to the Governor-General, Lord Auckland and also his nephew. He met Ranjit Singh in the last years of his life, while on a diplomatic mission to Lahore.

**Parkes, Fanny** was married to Charles, a civil servant in the East India Company. They arrived in 1822 and left in 1845.

**Pons, Father Jean-Francois** was a French Jesuit. The letters he sent to France from South India in 1740 reveal his awareness of the nature and range of Hindu philosophy.



**Postans, Marianne** (later Young) married Thomas Postans, an officer in the East India Company's Bombay Native Infantry in 1833 and came with him to India.

**Ripa, Father Matteo** was born on March 29, 1682, at Eboli, Lucania, in the Diocese of Salerno. He visited Calcutta in February 1709 on his way to China. His is one of the few missionary accounts of Bengal in those early days.

**Roberts, Emma** came to India in 1828 with her elder sister, who was married to Captain Robert McNaghten of the 61<sup>st</sup> Bengal Infantry. She returned to England in 1832. She again came in 1839 and died in Poona in 1840.

**Robertson, William** was a historian and his work on India, published in 1791, was regarded as authoritative. It went through several editions.

**Sherwood, Mrs. Martha Mary** was married to Henry Sherwood, an officer in H.M. 53<sup>rd</sup> Foot. The regiment was posted to India in 1805. They returned to England in 1816. She became an ardent evangelist and a close friend of the missionaries Daniel Corrie and Henry Martyn.

**Sleeman, W.H.** (1788-1856) served in the Sagar and Nerbudda territories from 1820, and was later Resident at Gwalior (1843-1849) and at Lucknow (1849-1856).

**Stanhope, Philip Dormer** ("Asiaticus") visited Calcutta from the September to December 1774 and his description of the British social life in this city is a literary masterpiece. He was of the First Regiment of Dragon Guards. He spent five years in different parts of India, three of which were spent in the service of the Nabob of Arcot,

**Stavorinus, John Splinter** (1739-1788), Rear Admiral in the service of the States-General, undertook two voyages to the Cape of Good Hope, Batavia, and Bengal, during the years 1768-1771. He was the first Dutch to give us his impressions of Calcutta. He came to Calcutta in 1768, three months after the departure of Mrs. Kindersley.

**Temple, Sir Richard** joined the East India Company in 1847 and was Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab in 1854. He held several other top posts and retired as Governor of Bombay.

**Tod, Colonel James** (1782-1835) came to India in 1799. He negotiated



the treaties that brought the Rajput chieftains under British suzerainty. He recorded Rajput history in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

**Twining, Thomas** was a civil servant of the East India Company whose account of his observations and travels in India beginning in 1792 was preserved by his son, T.T. Twining and edited for publication by Rev. William Twining.

**Valentia, Viscount** came to India as a tourist and to pursue his botanical interests. He arrived in 1802 and stayed for four years. He wrote admiringly of Lord Wellesley, met many Indian princes, including the Raja of Tanjore with whom he conversed in English. He visited the Peshwa and also had a brief interview with the young widow of Nana Fadnawis, the Maratha statesman. He claimed to have shaken hands with the Rani of Ramnad.

**Vigne, G.T.** came as a private traveller and was not in the service of the East India Company. He was the first foreigner to describe the game of polo (*chaughan*). His account was first published in 1842.

**Wendel, Father** was a French Jesuit missionary who came to India in 1751. He died at Lucknow in 1803.

**Wilkins, Charles** came to Bengal as a Writer in 1770 and went on to become one of the leading early Orientalists. He was the first Englishman to acquire a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, of which he published a grammar in 1779. He translated the *Gita*, the *Hitopadesha* and the *Panchatantra*. He prepared the first Bengali and Persian types and set up printing presses at Calcutta for oriental languages.

**Williamson, Captain Thomas** author of *East India Vade-Mecum; or, complete Guide to Gentlemen intended for the Civil, Military, or Naval Service of the Hon. East India Company* (1810) wrote of all the knowledge he had acquired of eastern India from a residence of twenty years in the Bengal Presidency in the military service of the Company.

**Wilson, Rev. John** (1804-1875) came to India in 1829 and lived in Bombay for 47 years as representative of the Scottish Missionary Society. He was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University in July 1857.

**Ziegenbalg, Bartholomaeus** (1683-1719) was the first Danish Protestant missionary to come to India. He studied Tamil and become the first Dravidologist. He arrived in Tranquebar in 1708-9.



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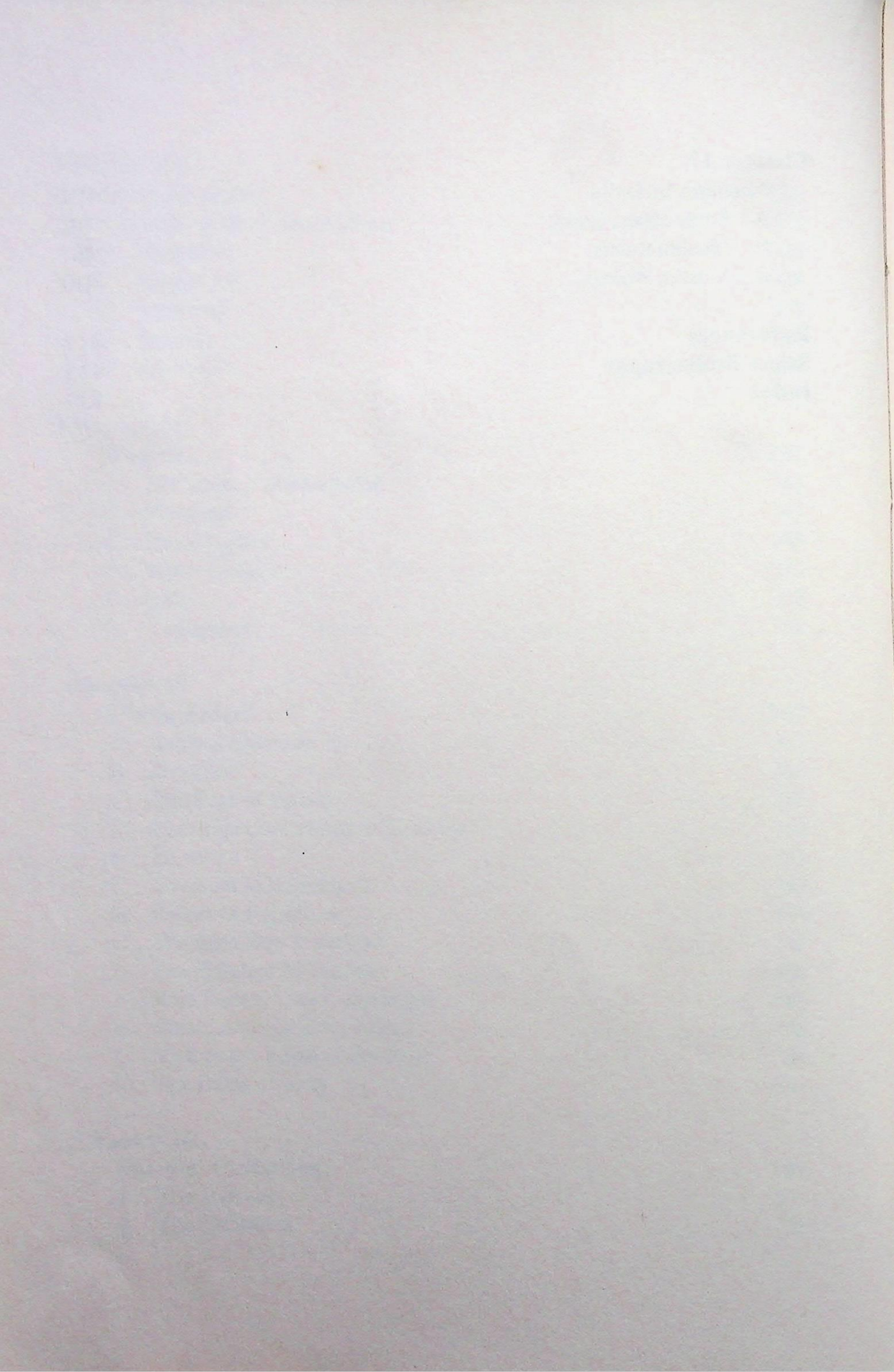
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## Chapter 1

# Abundant India

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- A. Some observations on the land
- B. Natural wealth
- C. Climate
- D. Animal kingdom
- E. Mines

## A. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE LAND

### 1. The varied shores of the Ganges, William Hodges<sup>1</sup>

From Mongheir I embarked, and returned by water to Calcutta; and here I had an opportunity of observing a series of scenery perfectly new; the different boats of the country, and the varied shores of the Ganges. This immense current of water suggests rather the idea of an ocean than a river, the general breadth of it being from two to five miles, and in some places more. The largest boats sailing up or passing down, appear, when in the middle of the stream, as mere points, and the eastern shore only as a dark line marking the horizon. The rivers I have seen in Europe, even the Rhine, appear as rivulets in comparison with this enormous mass of water. I do not know a more pleasant amusement than sailing down the Ganges in the warm season: the air, passing over the great reaches of the river many miles in length, is so tempered as to feel delightfully refreshing. After sun-set the boats are generally moored close to the banks, where the shore is bold, near a *gunge* or market, for the accommodation of the people. It is common, on the banks of the river, to see small Hindoo temples, with *gauts* or passages, and flights of steps to the river.

### 2. Conjectures regarding Bengal, De Grandpre<sup>2</sup>

...we must suppose the province of Bengal to be of no remote antiquity. It is a vast plain, without a single mountain of granite; the little hills which



are met with are merely hardened clay; and, except towards the northern extremity, not a stone, even of a calcareous description, is to be found.

If we were assured by tradition, that the race of the Bramins are the true aborigines of the country, and that it has been inhabited from periods more remote than our chronology can trace, this fact would overthrow the system, not of the absolute retreat of the sea, but of its gradual and progressive retreat; for there are proofs so strong on the most elevated parts of the globe of such elevations having been formerly covered by the water, that it is impossible to resist their evidence. Accordingly Bengal, at some period or other, must have been in the same situation. This being admitted, the principles of hydrostatics will make it impossible to suppose this province to have been cleared of its waters prior to places of a more elevated position. If we consider its trifling height, when compared with the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Gates, and lastly the mountains of Thibet, which seem to rise proudly above it, we must suppose it to be country in its infancy. The coast of Bengal is so low, that it cannot be seen at the distance of three leagues; a heavy sea would overflow it; and when the tide is unusually high, at the sizygies, the banks of the Ganges are under water. If I may offer the result of my own observation, Bengal is of the same age as the plain of India, which extends from the coast as far as the Gates, or perhaps a little more modern. This land is all on nearly the same level, and must consequently have been left by the ocean at nearly the same period...

The extraordinary fertility of this country evinces it to be of modern formation, and the retreat of the ocean is marked by irrefragable proofs. The Clive-islands have evidently been formed by the sea; the sand-banks called Brasses experience a slow but regular conformation, and will hereafter be converted into islands, when the Clive-islands will be joined to the continent. The bank called Seareef is a new bank, which the sea is adding to the others. Even the Ganges diminishes in depth; a circumstance that is not produced by the elevation of its bottom, for the violence of the current effectually prevents it, but by the water retiring to a lower level. When the French company was first established in this country, ships of war of seventy-four guns came to Chandernagore; but afterwards they were obliged to stop at Mayapoor, and at present can reach no further than Cadjery, a small village at the mouth of the river.

### **3. Favoured Hindostan, Maria Graham<sup>3</sup>**

Nature seems to have taken pleasure in embellishing and enriching the favoured country of Hindostan with every choicest gift. Under a pure sky and brilliant sun the soil produces the most exquisite fruits, and the most abundant harvests; the rocks are rich in gems, the mountains teem with gold, and the fleecy pod of the cotton furnishes in profusion the light garment fitted to the



climate. In travelling in the interior, your eyes will often be enchanted with the most delicious landscapes. Amidst stupendous forests you will not unfrequently be charmed with a cultivated spot, where, if ever, you might realize the dreams of the poets, and indulge in that impassioned indolence which is the parent of poetry and of the fine arts.

#### **4. Waterfall of Pappanassum, Thomas and William Daniell<sup>4</sup>**

The Fall of Pappanassum is on the river Tumrabunni, a considerable stream in the district of Tinnyvelly. A few miles below the fall, that river passes the fort of Palamcottah, and thence proceeds in an easterly course towards the sea, into which it is received in the gulph of Manapar.

This magnificent cataract is held by the Hindoos in great veneration, and is accordingly visited by innumerable devotees. The only approach to it is by a single path on the right-hand side of the valley, whence, though near to the fall, it cannot be seen, owing to the interposition of a large mass of rock that projects into the water. The path is continued up the face of the rock by means of a flight of steps; and at the summit a gate is so placed, that all visitors must of necessity pass through it, but which nevertheless readily opens to all who are provided with a small fee for the bramins that guard the sacred portal.

Nothing can be more grand and impressive than when, on first throwing open the gate, this extraordinary scene bursts upon the sight. It would be difficult for those who have never seen a vast river precipitated down a rocky steep of considerable elevation to form an adequate idea of such a spectacle, accompanied by a noise so tremendous, that, comparatively, all other sounds are but whispers. Upon the minds of Hindoos, who attach ideas of a religious nature to these objects, such scenes must operate with great effect, and powerfully stimulate their piety. Indeed their prostrations, and other anticks of enthusiasm, on first beholding this tremendous object, are evident proofs of the intensity of their feelings.

#### **5. The Binoa River, William Moorcroft<sup>5</sup>**

The Binoa river rises in Chamba, from Yara ki joth about fifteen kos north-east of Baidyanathpur, and passing that place to the south, falls into the Byas opposite Kamlagerh, insulating with the Bakar khad the tract already noticed, called Molag. Its whole course is about twenty-seven kos, and it receives the Loni and the Sansari rivers. Both these rise in Kulu; the former at Tatto-ani [hot spring], ten kos north-north-east from Baidyanathpur, and falls into the Binoa at Diwar, two kos from Baidyanathpur; the latter at a place distant from Baidyanathpur, six kos east by north, and falls into the Binoa about two kos from the place in the same direction. The Binoa varies much and suddenly at different seasons. In the cold weather it is fordable in many



places; in the hot weather its depth is much increased by the melting of snows; in the rains it is a deep and rapid stream. We crossed it on skins at Golden Ghat, where it was sixty feet broad and eight deep. Fronting us was a bank of perpendicular rock forty feet high, over which the water from the rice grounds fell in two beautiful cascades...

## **6. James Fraser, the first European to reach the Gangotri in 1815 [so he claimed], described the experience<sup>6</sup>**

It is easy to write of rocks and wilds, of torrents and precipices; it is easy to tell of the awe such scenes inspire:... But it is not so simple, to many surely not very possible, to convey an adequate idea of the stern and rugged majesty of some scenes; to paint their lonely desertness, or describe the undefinable sensation of reverence and dread that steals over the mind while contemplating the deathlike ghastly calm that is shed over them; and when at such a moment we remember our homes, our friends, our firesides, and all social intercourse with our fellows, and feel our present solitude, and far distance from all these dear ties, how vain is it to strive at description! Surely such a scene is Gungotree.... We were now in the centre of the stupendous Himala, the loftiest and perhaps most rugged range of mountains in the world. We were at the acknowledged source of that noble river, equally an object of veneration and a source of fertility, plenty, and opulence to Hindostan; and we had now reached the holiest shrine of Hindoo worship which these holy hills contain. These are surely striking considerations, combining with the solemn grandeur of the place, to move the feelings strongly.

## **7. Gangotri, the sacred source of the Ganges, Emma Roberts<sup>7</sup>**

...the summit of a ridge whence the first view of the Ganges is obtained; a sight which never fails to raise the drooping spirits of the Hindoo followers, and which excites no small degree of enthusiasm in the breast of the Christian travellers. The sacred river, as seen from this height, flows in a dark, rapid and broad stream, and, though at no great apparent distance, must still be reached by more than one toilsome march. From a height about two miles from Gungootree, the first glimpse, and that a partial one, is obtainable of that holy place, which lies sequestered in a glen of the deepest solitude, lonely and almost inaccessible, for few there are who could persevere in surmounting the difficulties of the approach. Considerable distances must be traversed over projecting masses of rough stones, flinty, pointed, and uncertain, many being loose, and threatening to roll over the enterprising individual who attempts the rugged way...

The grandeur of the scene which opened upon us, as we at length stood upon the threshold of Gungootree, cannot be described by words. Rocks were



piled upon rocks in awful majesty, all shivered into points, which rise one upon another in splendid confusion, enclosing a glen of the wildest nature, where the Ganges, beautiful in every haunt, from its infancy to its final junction with the ocean, pours its shallow waters over a bed of shingle, diversified by jutting rocks, and even here shadowed by the splendid foliage of some fine old trees. The devotee who undoubtingly believes that every step that he takes towards the source of that holy river, which from his infancy he has been taught to look upon as a deity, will lead him into beatitude, is content to seek its origin at Gungoottee, but the true source of the sacred stream lies still higher, in still more inaccessible solitudes: and it was reserved for the ardour of those who measured the altitudes of the highest peaks, and penetrated to the utmost limits of man's dominion, to trace the exact birth-place of the holy river. Captains Hodgson and Herbert, in 1818, found, at the height of thirteen thousand eight hundred feet above the sea-level, the Bhagarati, or true Ganges, issuing from beneath a low arch at the base of a vast mass of frozen snow, nearly three hundred feet in height, and composed of different layers, each several feet in thickness, and in all probability the accumulation of ages. Neither here, nor at Gungootree, is there anything resembling a cow's mouth, to support the popular fable, which must have been invented by persons utterly unacquainted with the true features of the scene in which the sacred river gladdens earth with its every-bounteous waters.

A pilgrimage to Gungootree is accounted one of the most meritorious actions which Hindoo can perform; and in commemoration of his visit to this holy place, a Ghoorka chieftain has left a memorial of his conquests and his piety, in a small pagoda, erected in honour of the goddess on a platform of rock, about twenty feet higher than the bed of the river. The Brahmins who have the care of this temple are accommodated with habitations in its close vicinity, and there are few sheds for the temporary residence of pilgrims, many of whom, however, are content with such shelter as the neighbouring caves afford.

## **8. Source of the Jumna, Emma Roberts<sup>8</sup>**

By dint of untiring perseverance, and no small exertion of bodily strength, we at last found ourselves on the confines of eternal snow. As we approached Jumnotree, which is not accessible until the month of May, we found the river gliding under arches of ice, through which it had worn its passage, and at length, these masses becoming too strongly frozen to yield and fall into the current, the stream itself could be traced no longer, and, if not at its actual source, we stood at the first stage of its youthful existence. It is quite impossible to prevent a feeling of exultation from springing up in the mind, at the completion of a pilgrimage to a place so deservedly celebrated; an enterprise



which few people have an opportunity of achieving, and still fewer the nerve to undertake. We had deemed it impossible that the awful grandeur of the preceding scene could have been heightened, yet standing on the snow which now completely covered the bed of the river, and beholding it from the place whence it emerged, we were as much struck with the sublimity of the landscape, as if we had come upon it suddenly, and without previous preparation. The glen is not more than thirty or forty feet in width, and the rocks on either side are of the noblest dimensions, and crowned with dark luxuriant foliage, while the impenetrable region beyond – solemn, majestic and wonderfully beautiful – seems absolutely to strike upon the soul, so strange are the sensations which it produces in the craving heart of man, as it defies the farther intrusion of his adventurous footsteps.

The most holy spot is found upon the left bank, where a mass of quartz and silicious schist rock sends forth five hot springs into the bed of the river, which boil and bubble at a furious rate. When mingled with the icy-cold stream of the Jumna, these smoking springs form a very delightful tepid bath, and the pilgrims, after dipping their hands in the hottest part, perform much more agreeable ablutions, where the temperature offers the desirable medium between the scalding water above and the chilling stream below. It is usual with the devotees to make an offering of money to the divinity of the river, an offering which of course finds its way to the pocket of the officiating priest, who prays over the bathers, and marks them on the forehead in the most orthodox fashion with the sacred mud of the place....

The height of the snow-bed at Jumnootree is about ten thousand feet, and in the month of October, when all the snow that ever melts is melted at this place, it is possible to advance somewhat nearer source than at any other period of the year. Crossing the snowy bed whence the water emerges at Jumnootree, is a work of some difficulty, and when accomplished, we find that the infant river is divided into three streams, each forming a separate waterfall, and flowing over steep green hills. The lower of these are surmountable, but with great difficulty and some danger, as the stones are loose, and slip from under the feet...

Those persons who have proceeded as far as the present circumstances will admit, that is, about a mile beyond Jumnootree have ascertained that the most direct stream of the river does not arise from any part of Bundurpooch, but from the range that runs off it to the westward. As we stand at Jumnootree, these small streams are perceptible before their junction into one fall, which loses itself under a mass of snow, whence it issues near the hot springs before mentioned...

The forest stretches at least fifteen hundred feet above the snowy bed of the Jumna, before vegetation is entirely forbidden by the frosts of the giant heights beyond. The geologist may take a very interesting collection at



Jumnootree; beautiful specimens of garnet, shorl, and tourmaline crystals being to be found: there is a considerable quantity of talcose gneiss rock, but the greater proportion is a coarse gneiss, while the granite summits of the mountain-peaks rise to the height of ten thousand feet above...

### **9. Himalaya Mountains, Bishop Heber<sup>9</sup>**

At last, soon after the sun rose, and just as we had reached a small rising ground, the mist rolled away and shewed us again the Himalaya, distinct and dark, with the glorious icy mountains, towering in a clear blue sky, above the nearer range. There were four of these, the names of three of which Mr. Boulderson knew, Bhadrinath, Kedar Nath, and the peak above the source of the Ganges, the Meru of Hindoo fable. The fourth, to the extreme right, he did not know, and I could not find it in Arrow-smith's map. Bhadrinath, he told me, is reckoned the highest. From hence, however, it is not the most conspicuous of the four. That we saw the snow peaks at all, considering their distance, and that mountains twice as high as Snowdon intervened, is wonderful...

The Clwydian chain, indeed, is not crowned by such noble pinnacles as Bhadrinath and Gangotree, but I could not help feeling now, and I felt it still more when I began to attempt to commit the prospect to paper, that the awe and wonder which I experience were of a very complex character, and greatly detached from the simple act of vision. The eye is, by itself, and without some objects to form a comparison, unable to judge of such heights at such a distance. Carneth Llewellyn and Snowdon, at certain times in the year, make, really, as good a picture as the mountains now before me; and the reason that I am so much more impressed with the present view, is partly the mysterious idea of awful and inaccessible remoteness attached to the India Caucasus, the center of earth.

### **10. Second chain of Himalayas, Bishop Heber<sup>10</sup>**

The only satisfaction to be derived from a journey through such a country, is to look steadily at the mountains beyond it, which increase as we advance in apparent magnitude and beauty. The snowy peaks, indeed, are less and less distinguishable; but the nearer range rises into a dignity and grandeur which I by no means was prepared for, and is now clearly seen to be itself divided into several successive ridges, with all the wildest and most romantic forms of ravine, forest, crag, and precipice. They are now perceptibly and obviously, even to the eye, the highest mountains I ever saw sufficiently near to judge of them.



**11. Ascent of the Ghats, Bishop Heber<sup>11</sup>**

The views offered from different parts of this ascent are very beautiful, and much reminded me of some parts of the Vale of Corwen. The mountains are nearly the same height (from 2000 to 3000 feet above the level of sea,) with the average of Welsh mountains; and the freshness and verdure which clothes them during the rains, as well as the fleecy clouds continually sweeping over them, increased their likeness to the green dells and moist climate of Gwyneth. In one respect, and only one, the Ghats have the advantage, – their precipices are higher, and the outline of the hills consequently bolder. That outline, indeed, is remarkable, consisting, in by far the majority of instances, of a plane table summit, or else a long horizontal ridge, supported by sides as steep and regular as if artificially scarped, with natural terraces at uncertain heights, each with its own precipice, affording a striking specimen of what is called the trap formation. There is a good deal of forest timber on the sides of these hills, and the gorges of the valleys are thickly wooded. The trees, however, are not, singly taken, of any great size, either here, or in the Deckan, or in Bombay, a circumstance in which these countries seem remarkably contrasted with Guzerat, and the greater part of northern India.

**Waterfall at Candaulah**

Near Candaulah is a waterfall, which flows all the year, and at this season is very full and beautiful. It falls in three or four successive descents down one of the highest precipices I ever saw, not less, I should apprehend, than 1200 feet, into a valley of very awful depth and gloom, through which its stream winds to join the sea, nearly opposite to Tannah, under the name of the Callianee river...

**12. Beautiful Krishna Valley, Marianne Postans<sup>12</sup>**

Few scenes are more lovely than the beautiful Valley of the Krishna, as seen from the open Temples of Mahabuleshwar. The smooth and brightly gleaming waters, like a silvery thread, wind their quiet way between the richly wooded hills, which form a vista of fertile shelter to the grassy banks; while the herds, feeding peacefully beside the sacred river, complete the scene, and afford a glimpse of pastoral beauty, the more fair and sweet, perhaps, as contrasted with sublime mountain solitudes of the immediate neighbourhood...

The climate of Mahabuleshwar is frequently sufficiently cold to render fires necessary, and is found highly renovating to constitutions exhausted by a long residence in the sultry plains. Fogs, in the autumn months, are prevalent, but are not found to produce either unpleasant or dangerous effects.

The walks and drives about the hills, are numerous and beautiful; long avenues, shaded by magnificent forest trees, afford noon-tide shelter, and permit



the visitor the unusual and safe indulgence, of a mid-day stroll beneath their shade, while here and there an opening in the rich foliage, affords a glimpse of the superb mountain-scenery around, arresting the step in admiration of its sublime and varied wonders. Bold peaks, towering and cloud-capt Ghauts, sparkling cascades, hill-forts, deep straths, and wooded glens, blend their magnificent effects in a succession of rich and glowing pictures, more wondrous and more grand, than even Italy with her bold Alps and smiling Pyrenees, can charm the traveller's eye withal. No snowy peaks, 'tis true, blushing in the rays of the sun-lit sky, form backgrounds to the scene, but veils of fleecy vapour, with mazy indistinctness, shroud the towering scraps of the eternal hills, while the clear atmosphere around, permits the eye to revel in the full majesty of these stupendous scenes, revealing the sun-lit valleys and the quiet occupation of their peasants, as clearly as it does the dense jungle of the mountain side, crowded with its wild and savage denizens.

### **13. Navigation of the Indus, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>13</sup>**

We set out at day-break on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> September. The river, which was 600 feet in breadth at the place of embarkation, soon became twice as wide. The sun emerged from its wide watery expanse, and illumined once more the shining summit of the city of the sepulchres....

The navigation of the Indus is very difficult on account of its shifting bed and violent current, which runs four miles an hour: we were therefore obliged to cast anchor every evening, and every day to take on board a new pilot. The slimy and dirty water of the river, when clarified by alum, becomes as clear as crystal, and very pleasant; but the cook on board the steamer would not take this trifling trouble, which would have added so greatly to our comfort. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, in the forenoon, the thermometer being at 98° Fahrenheit, we proceeded along the right bank; beautiful woods diversify the monotony of the country, and the fresh verdure of the meadows covered with yellow flowers enlivens the eye. We passed a preserve three miles in length, ornamented with the finest babul trees, and surrounded with hedges and a clay wall. This preserve abounds with barbiroussas, antelopes, jackals, hyenas, black and red partridges, parrots and other birds.

On this day we twice stuck upon a sand bank, from which however our engine, and the strong current, soon set us free. In the evening we anchored in a beautiful wooded inlet; the moon behind the shadowy trees, between Jupiter and Venus, pouring her silver light through the foliage, while a cooling breeze wafted the perfume of the babul flowers towards us.



## B. NATURAL WEALTH

### 1. The tamarind tree, Father Matteo Ripa<sup>14</sup>

...the Tamarind tree, which grows there, is so famous among the English that, when they return to London and speak of what they have seen, they make a special mention of the Tamarind tree of Gollicatan [Calcutta].

### 2. Tamarind tree delectable to behold, John Burnell<sup>15</sup>

The tamarind tree is very delectable to behold, being likewise very full of spreading branches, the leaves growing like to the box tree in England, but are shaped something more longer, and not of that hardness with the forementioned, but more pliable. It shooteth out a white flower, which hath no grateful flavour, which falling off, produces its fruit in shape of a peascod, being filled with a row of stones, covered with a brittle shell, which incloseth the pulp, being of a pleasant acid quality, and is a good commodity in Europe.

### 3. The Jaqua and other trees, Father Matteo Ripa<sup>16</sup>

In the garden of the said Capuchins I saw for the first time on a tree a fruit which tickled my curiosity so much that I must describe it. It is called Giacca, or Taqua, as the Portuguese write it. The tree was of the size of a moderate oak and the fruit is of the size of a bag of middling size, about four palms long and proportionately thick, viz., a little than two palms in diameter; and because, if this fruit were to grow on the branches like other fruits, the branches would certainly not be able to bear its weight, Nature has wisely ordained that it should grow on the trunk. In the Island of Zeilan, in Malacca, and other parts of the Indies, they say that it grows from the roots underground, and the Indians know that it is ripe when they smell at the foot of the tree an unwonted odour emanating from the fruit. Those which hang from the trunk, they cut down when they have reached their proper consistency, and hang them up in their houses: and they know the fruit is ripe when it begins to emit a very sweet smell. Then, they make a cut into it, through which they pull out with their hand day after day a great quantity of yellow pods, which are very sweet, and each of them contains, like the date, a small nut which, when roasted has the taste of chestnuts.

#### The fig

What surprised me too, was the fig, both the tree and the fruit. The trunk of the tree, about twenty palms high by one palm, more or less, in diameter, is not ligneous, like that of other trees, but a mass of leaves, one within the other like an onion; hence, it is so tender that it can easily be cut with a knife. This tree has no twigs; it ends in the leaves, which around the top of the stem



bend over in the shape of palm-leaves. These leaves are about four palms broad and very long, and they are not divided like those of the date-tree, but entire. It produces fruit only once and as early as six months after having been planted; and, as it is planted at all times, these excellent fruits can be had plentifully in the Indies all the year round. The fruit hangs down towards the ground from the top of the stem, and resembles a bunch of grapes, but one as much as three palms long and about a palm in diameter, while some grapes – a bunch has at times as many as a hundred – grow to the length of a palm or less, the girth being that of a middlesized hen's egg. When the cluster has reached its proper consistency, they pluck it, hang it up in their houses, and take the grapes in proportion as they see them turn yellow, for they do not become yellow at the same time. To eat the fruit, you take away the rind, and eat the inner pulp together with some tender small black seeds, the taste being very good. The tree is cut down when it has given its fruit, and sprouts spring up in its stead, which are transplanted and yield a bunch each after six months. Among our European Christians in the Indies it is commonly said that our first parents, Adam and Eve, covered themselves with the leaves of this tree in the earthly Paradise, one being enough to cover half of a man's body; and it was a Heretical surgeon who first made me remark besides that, when the fruit is cut across, it shows the image of a Crucifix.

### Ananas

It was also particularly pleased to see and eat the ananas (*Ananasos*): hence, I wish to describe also here this other Indian fruit. It is produced, not by a tree, but by a plant which resembles somewhat the aloe. It looks at first sight like a pinecone, and that is why the Spaniards properly call it Pinnas. The smallest of these fruits is like a big pine-cone, and the biggest measure more than a palm in length and half a palm in diameter. When the green skin is removed with a knife, a yellow pulp appears, which is hard like that of an unripe apple, and has the smell of musk; the taste, which is between sweet and sour, is very pleasant, especially when the slices have been steeped in water mixed with sugar. Even when still unripe, it can be preserved, and it is exported that way to Spain, where it is highly prized. Of its nature it is wholesome, but so hot that, if you leave a knife in it for a day only, they say it spoils and consumes it. I saw this plant, as also other Indian trees and their fruit, such as the coffee-tree in Vienna, where Prince Eugene, that great Hero of modern history, had imported them. I saw there too the coffee-tree with its fruit, all these trees being planted in a glass-house, where by means of stoves they imitated the hot climate of the Indies.

### Papaya

There is still another fruit, the Papaya. Having bought two of them, I



thought at first they were melons of the kind which the Neapolitans call Turkish; but, they differed in their seeds, which are like pepper. This plant, which I saw also in other places of the Indies which I visited, and again in Macao and Canton, produces fruit every month of the year, flowers and fruits yet unripe being found on it at the same time. The fruits are more fragrant than our melons, which they partly resemble in taste; and they grow round the top of the tree's stem like dates. On my return from China, I brought seeds with me, and planted them here. They grew four palms high, when, the winter supervening, they dried up, the trunk of the biggest tree of the kind being so tender that you could easily cut through it with a penknife...

#### **4. The Russa tree, Edward Ives<sup>17</sup>**

Near Calcutta is a large spreading tree called the *Russa*, which make a fine appearance when in full bloom. The natives say that this, and another near the Dutch settlement, are the only two in Bengal; they pretend likewise that they could never find the seed, which must certainly be a mistake, because there is abundance, and large. That they could not preserve them may be true, because the ants and other vermin are excessively fond of them, so that you can never find a pod untouched either by insects within, or ants; Mr. Thomas attended the tree daily for a considerable time to procure a whole pod, but in vain. The bark is brown and rough; the leaves are a deep green, but bright; they are pinnated, 4 pair and an odd one, or 5 pair on every pinna; several of these grow round every branch, which makes the whole bushy. The flower grows out between the lower leaves of the pinnae, on a short but strong footstalk; this divides and subdivides into a greater number, so as to make the whole a hemisphere. On the top of each of these, is a flower of a bright crimson, orange and different shades down to yellow; they are monopetalous; the cup is about an inch long, divided above in four, ten stamina, and one style: they almost cover the tree, and there is a long succession of them, but little smell. The fruit is a pod of the shape and size of a large garden bean, containing 4 or 5 large fleshy seeds, which easily fall in two when dry; they are brown on the outside, white within, nearly square, but convex on the sides.

#### **5. Fruits in Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>18</sup>**

Abundance of fruit grows wild in Kashmir, and many thousands of acres, skirting the foot of the hills, are covered with apple and pear trees, and vines in full bearing; they are also cultivated, as are apricots, peaches, cherries and plums.

##### **Walnut of four varieties**

An article of horticultural cultivation is the walnut, of which there are



four varieties; one called *khanak*, is wild, the other three, termed *wantu*, *dunu*, and *kaghazi*, are cultivated...

### Grapes

There are said to be eighteen or twenty varieties of grapes in Kashmir, of which four only are of foreign introduction...

### The Sanjit

The Sanjit, which has been noticed as growing in Ladakh, is still more plentiful in Kashmir. The tree has a beautiful appearance; its flowers are exquisitely sweet, and its fruit by distillation yields a beverage which the Chinese hold to be not inferior to that of the grape.

### Horse-chesnut

The horse-chesnut is wild in the forests, and has not been reclaimed. The hazel is abundant, but it is so luxuriant in the production of wood and leaf, that the nuts, scarcely of the size of peas, do not come to perfection. The alder is of rapid growth, and the shoots, when the head happens to be destroyed, are straight, tall, and free from knots.

### The Deodar

The most valuable tree of Kashmir is, however, the Deodar, a variety of cedar, the timber of which is extensively employed in the construction of houses, temples, and bridges: pieces of it from the Zein-ul-kadal bridge were found little decayed, although exposed to the action of water for four hundred years.

### Saffron

The crocus of Kashmir has long been celebrated for the excellence of its saffron. It produces freely the third year after being planted: the greater part is exported to Hindustan. Amongst other useful plants occur the *Alisma plantago*, and the *Carthamus tinctorius*...

## 6. **Banyan tree covers an entire island, Bishop Heber<sup>19</sup>**

Another curiosity in this neighborhood is the celebrated *bur* or banyan tree, called *Kuveer Bur*, from a saint who is said to have planted it. It stands on, and entirely covers an island of the Nerbudda about twelve miles above Broach. Of this tree, which has been renowned ever since the first coming of the Portuguese to India, which is celebrated by our early voyagers and by Milton, and which, the natives tell us boasted a shade sufficiently broad to shelter 10,000 horse, a considerable part has been washed away with the soil



on which it stood, within these few years, by the freshes of the river, but enough remains, as I was assured, to make it one of the noblest groves in the world, and well worthy of all the admiration which it has received.

### **7. Neem and peepal trees, Fanny Parkes<sup>20</sup>**

We have been occupied in planting a small avenue of *neem* trees in front of the house; unlike the air around the tamarind, that near a *neem* tree is reckoned wholesome – according to the Gujarati proverb, we had made no advance on our heavenward road until the avenue was planted, which carried us on one-third of the journey. No sooner were the trees in the ground, than the servants requested to be allowed to marry a *neem* to a young peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*), which marriage was accordingly celebrated by planting a peepal and *neem* together, and entwining their branches. Some *pooja* was performed at the same time which, with the ceremony of the marriage, was sure to bring good fortune to the newly-planted avenue.

The *neem* is a large and beautiful tree, common in most parts of India (*Melia azadirachta* or margosa tree); its flowers are fragrant – a strong decoction of the leaves is used as a cure for strains.

Oil is prepared from the berry of the *neem* (*neem cowrie*, as they call it,) which is esteemed excellent, and used as a liniment in violent headaches brought on by exposure to the sun, and in rheumatic and spasmodic affections. The flowers are fragrant: anything remarkably bitter is compared to the *neem* tree; 'yeh duwa kurwee hy jyse neem': this medicine is bitter as *neem*.

The bacain, or maha nimba (*Melia sempervivens*), a variety of the *neem* tree, is remarkably beautiful. The *neem* tree will not become sweet though watered with syrup and clarified butter.

### **8. The Peepal, Honoria Lawrence<sup>21</sup>**

...a *peepul* tree, a kind of aspen, which strikes its roots into every crack and fissure of a building, and soon loosens the stones. The seeds are carried by birds, and are often deposited on the bark of another tree, where they take root, and completely smother their abode. There is among the natives a superstition that if a man who has planted a tree, dies in debt, the creditor comes in the form of a *peepul*, roots itself in the tree and destroys it.

### **9. Grove of bamboos at Revelganj, Honoria Lawrence<sup>22</sup>**

...we stopped in a grove of bamboos. Among the beauties of the vegetable world, this is conspicuous, from one root or bunch of roots, scores and hundreds of stems arise to the height of sixty or eighty feet, each perfectly straight tapering to the top, feathered with bunches of long narrow leaves and leaning from the center outwards, so that the clump has the shape of a hearse-plume.



But in the aspect of the bamboo, there is nothing funereal. It is a bright green, its stems covered with a thin verdant bark, beneath which is the beautiful natural yellow varnish of the cane. This tree is the resort of fireflies. At night they seem like drops of light shaken from the branches.

#### 10. Mango groves, Honoria Lawrence<sup>23</sup>

In this *Zillah* [Gorakhpur] the mango *topes* are among its principal beauties, as well as advantages. To plant a *tope* is amongst the natives an act of religion and certainly one of benevolence. So much are these trees esteemed that a Hindoo will not cut down even one that is decayed, and I never observed one that appeared wantonly injured. The shade of the mango is so dense that it defies the sun, and does not favour the growth of weeds or jungle. It is in leaf all the year round, changing its foliage in March, but never becoming bare. The mango grows to a great size, especially in this district, where it rises to eighty or a hundred feet. A few feet above the root the trunk generally parts into two or three diversions, which sub-divide into large branches, running upwards very much as a pear tree grows. But when a tree stands detached, it throws out its arms on every side, and looks not unlike a fine oak. After passing through jungle or even over fields when the sun has set, there is a dry warm feeling immediately on entering the *tope*. The trees are regularly planted in rows, so that standing in the midst, there is in every direction a lofty green vista, forming a noble avenue up to the camp.

### C. CLIMATE

#### 1. Two seasons, Robert Orme<sup>24</sup>

The climate of India is divided into two seasons: from the month of October to March, the wind continually blows from the northern, and in the other months from the southern points of the compass. These seasons, called by navigators monsoons, are suspended twice in the year, for the space of twenty or thirty days, whilst one of the reigning winds is losing, and the other acquiring strength. The southern winds, passing through regions inflamed by a perpendicular sun, and accompanying its approach, diminish nothing of its influence; the season of their duration is therefore very hot indeed. The northern winds, after having scoured the vast plains of Tartary, receive additional keenness in their passage over the summits of Mount Caucasus, covered with eternal snows: they bring intense cold into the countries which lay at the foot of the mountains; but do not carry more than a very moderate degree of it beyond the 30<sup>th</sup> degree latitude; for as during the whole time of their continuance the air is pure and unclouded, the sun has always heat at noon;



and so much in the southern parts of India as to give Europeans very little, if any sense of cold, not more than that of the month of June in England.

## **2. The tropical Indian climate, Bessie Fenton<sup>25</sup>**

It would be impossible to convey to any one who has never been in the tropical climate the beauty, the luxury of such a scene; at such an hour, the air becomes so pure and balmy, the atmosphere so highly rarefied, the moon and stars shine with a brilliance unknown in our hemisphere. The most slender leaf seen between you and the deep blue sky is accurately defined; the waving boughs of the coca [coconut?] that seem at intervals to stir from some internal impulse are so beautifully contrasted with the thick foliage of the mango, glossy as the holly tree. The hum of grasshoppers is ceaseless, and the banyan trees are white with doves whose soft note is perpetually heard. The glorious sun is now above the horizon...it is difficult to describe such a morning in downright prose, unless it were that of Walter Scott's novels...

## **3. Climate of Bengal, A Voyage To Calcutta In 1761, author unknown<sup>26</sup>**

The climate of Bengal is perhaps as bad as any in the universe, and remarkably fatal to our countrymen. It abounds so much with standing waters and the earth is so much impregnated with saltpetre that when the Sun rarifies the water the air becomes absolutely putrid, and this occasions the frequency of agues and putrid fevers. In the winter season mists and fogs are very frequent in the evenings and mornings, which are very cold; yet the day is very hot. The whole country has a disagreeable aspect: so low that not a mole-hill is to be seen full of woods and thickets, the haunt of tigers.

## **4. A North-wester in Calcutta, Mrs. Nathaniel Kindersley<sup>27</sup>**

Last night, or rather early this morning, we had for the first time since my arrival, what is called a *North-wester*, which are very frequent in the hot season; a *North-wester* is a violent storm of wind from that quarter, attended with thunder, lightning, and rain; the loudness of the thunder, the terrible flashes of lightning, the roaring of the wind, which carries all before it, and the deluge of rain, are altogether tremendous: it appeared as if every crack of thunder must tear roof of the house I was in from end to end.

The tempest being spent, was succeeded by the azure morn, and the radiant Sun; which tempered by the coolness of the earth, formed some hours of the most delightful climate that can be imagined, but was too soon followed by excessive heat, for after every *North-wester*, the heat sensibly increases till the rains commence. Every one now begins to look forward to that season, wishing it was come...

I sat down to give you an account of the weather and climate, which



insensibly led me to the consequences of it: every thing but cold is in extremes here, the heat is intense, the rains floods, the winds hurricanes, and the hailstones I dare not tell you how large, lest you should think I have the licence of a traveller. But what I always hold with reverence and awe and at the same time with pleasure, is the lightning; not an evening passes without it; it is not that offensive glare of light I have been used to see, but a beautiful fire, which plays amongst the clouds, and passes from one part of the heavens to another in every direction, and in every variety of vibration.

### **5. Seasons in the south, De Grandpre<sup>28</sup>**

The winds, with the exception of a few irregularities, by no means frequent, blow from two parts only of the horizon; from the quarter between north-north-east and east-north-east for six months, and the remainder of the year from south-south-west, to west-south-west. The passing of the sun across the equator determines the alteration of season. The wind, while the sun is in the northern hemisphere, blows from the south-west quarter, and *vice versa*; the currents also are then reversed, and follow the direction of the wind. These seasons are called monsoons. During the prevalence of the south-west monsoon, the Gauts, intercepting the storms and clouds, prevent them from passing to the coast of Coromandel, where, the weather being then beautiful, the season called summer prevails. The coast of Malabar, on the contrary, is at that period subject to violent rains and squalls, and there they have what they call winter. The currents run in a southerly direction on the coast of Malabar, and on the other coast towards the north. Six months after the winds change to the north-east; and the mountains producing a similar effect on the contrary side, stop the rains and storms in their course, and detain them on the coast of Coromandel, and accordingly that of Malabar has summer in its turn. The currents then run in a southerly direction on the former coast, and towards the north on the latter.

By means of this certainty of the seasons, the most indifferent vessels accomplish their voyages without difficulty, by taking advantage of the winds and currents.

### **6. The climate of the Deccan, Bishop Heber<sup>29</sup>**

The climate of the Deccan is highly praised during the rainy and cool seasons, and the hot winds are of no long duration. Its openness and height above the sea may be expected to render it salubrious.... The Concan are fertile, but generally speaking hot and unhealthy. Severndroog, however, and its neighbouring station of Dapoolie, in the southern Concan, being on an elevated part of the coast, enjoy a fine breeze, and have been fixed on as the site of a convalescent hospital for the European garrison of Bombay.



## **7. Climate of Guzerat, Bishop Heber<sup>30</sup>**

Guzerat is reckoned one of the worst climates in India, being intensely hot the greater part of the year, with a heavy thickness of atmosphere which few people can endure. It is in the same latitude with Calcutta, and seems to be what Bengal would be without the glorious Ganges.

## **8. Climate in the Assam region, William Griffith<sup>31</sup>**

The climate is certainly very cool and cold, the thermometer ranging from about 56° to 66° in-doors at this time of the year. The rains are said to be the coldest part of the year; they are excessive, commencing in April and ceasing in October. It occasionally rains for fifteen or sixteen days in succession, and without intermission; and nine or ten inches have been known to fall in twenty-four hours. Since we have been here, inclusive of this, we have had four days of wet weather, of which three were continued rain. Both were ushered in by the sudden irruption of heavy mists from below, which soon spread over the country, obscuring every thing. These sudden irruptions occur during the partial breaking up of the rain, during which time the valleys are completely choked up with dense mists, the summits of the hills on the opposite side to that on which one stands being alone visible. After the rains were over, in the first instance, the plains, or rather the mass of haze hanging over them, presented a most curious spectacle.

The coldest weather we have yet experienced was at Maamloo, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the thermometer at 8 p.m. being at 52°. This is remarkable, as Maamloo is rather below Churra.

# **D. ANIMAL KINGDOM**

## **1. The Rhinoceros, Captain Alexander Hamilton<sup>32</sup>**

...The distance between Sagor, the westernmost channel of the Ganges, and Chittagong easternmost, is about a hundred leagues, the maritime coast being divided into many small islands made by the currents of the Ganges, but very few are inhabited, because they are so pestered with tigers that there is little safety for other inhabitants and there are also many rhinoceroses on those islands, but they are not so dangerous neighbours as the tigers, yet, when provoked they will assault any living thing. Nature has endued him with two particular rarities out of her stores. One is a large horn placed on his nose. The second is a coat of mail to defend him from the teeth or claws of other fierce animals. His tongue is also somewhat of a rarity, for, if he can but get any of his antagonists down, he will lick them so clean that he leaves neither skin nor flesh to cover their bones; but he is seldom known to be an aggressor,



except when he meets with an elephant; then he sharpens his horn and assaults, though he is much inferior to the elephant in bulk and strength, being no bigger than a very large ox, yet he often overcomes in spite of the elephant's teeth.

## 2. Adjutant bird, Edward Ives<sup>33</sup>

In the evening excursions which I made with Captain Martin, Mr. Doidge, Mr. Thomas, and other friends near Calcutta, we had often observed an extraordinary species of birds, called by the natives *Argill*, or *Hurgill*, a native of Bengal. They would majestically stalk along before us, and at first we took them for Indians, naked. Upon discovering however that they were birds, we resolved to shoot one, to satisfy our curiosity relative to their exact magnitude and shape. For this, we frequently went out with some of our fulfils loaded with ball, others with *Bristol* drop; but, though we had several good marks, our repeated efforts were fruitless. We had always been attended by the *Bearers* of our *Palanquins*, in whose countenances we could not but discern the most evident marks of satisfaction, on our want of success; at length one of them gravely told us, "That if we tried to eternity to kill these birds, we should never succeed, for that the souls of the *Brahmins* possessed them". We at last grew weary of the pursuit, and gave it over. But one evening as I was retuning from Calcutta, to a house which had been lent me in the neighbourhood, I observed one flying very slowly over my head, and afterwards to perch on a tree by which I was to pass; I took not the least notice to my *Bearers*, until they were within the distance of 30 or 40 yards, when I ordered them to stop, and having in my *Palanquin* a loaded fulfil, I discharged it at the *Monster*, and brought him down.

The following are the exact marks and dimensions of this bird: The wings expanded 14 feet 10 inches. From the tip of the bill to the extremity of the claw, it measured 7 feet 6 inches. The legs were naked, and so was one half of the thighs; the naked parts were full 3 feet in length. The feathers of the wings and back were very strong, and of an iron colour. The feathers of the breast were long: Over the belly was a great deal of down, all of a dirty white. The bill was 16 inches round at the base, of different colours, and nearly of a triangular shape. In the *craw* was a *Terapin* or land tortoise 10 inches long; and a large black male cat was found entire in it's stomach.

## 3. Tigers in Bengal, James Mitchell<sup>34</sup>

The Country is so much infested with Tygers that the windows and doors of the houses or rather mud hutts of *Culpee* are every night secured, although to the exclusion of the cooling breeze most grateful in that warm Climate. The Captains Steward of the *Winchester* sauntering in the twilight was seized by a Tyger within one hundred yards of the Town and carried amongst the



Pady (Rice) then in the ear; where his body was found next morning and the road perceived thro the Pady the Tyger had taken as he came or went; having only sucked the blood, the Natives knew he would return to mangle the Body, therefore they placed two stakes firmly in the ground with a strong Bamboo Bow betwixt them and two arrows drawn to the utmost stretch fixed to the Bow with wooden pins, to which strings were tyed and carried about twenty yards beyond the Body in the Tract he had made, and fastned to a dead Goat; according to expectation he returned, and meeting the dead Goat proceeded to tear him, unfixed the pins, the arrows flew off, one fixed in his shoulder, the other in his belly; he gave a hideous roar; the Natives assured he was wounded soon dispatched him; a large royal Tyger! the skin was purchased by Mr. Holt our 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lieutenant.

#### **4. Tigers numerous in Bengal, John Splinter Stavorinus<sup>35</sup>**

Tigers are very numerous in the woods, and they often sally out into the inhabited places. I saw some of them, which were kept, in wooden cages, by the English at Calcutta, of the size of a large calf. The great men of the land take much pleasure in making them fight with other animals, elephants and buffaloes.

#### **5. Capturing a tiger at Tehri, William Moorcroft<sup>36</sup>**

The vicinity of Tiri is infested with tigers, and a kind of trap is used to catch them. This is a small chamber of loose, heavy stones, with a sliding door at one end, and a loop hole at the other. The door is kept raised by a slight moveable projection, and from the upper part of it a rope passes over the roof of the hut, which, entering it by the loop-hole at the other extremity, is tied to the neck of a goat, who is slightly fastened within. The tiger, attracted by his prey, enters the hovel, and attempts to carry off the goat. In the struggle that ensues, the door, shaken by the rope in contact with it, frees itself of the slight impediment opposed to its descent, and, falling down by its own weight, secures the tiger. The animal is then shot through the loop-hole.

#### **6. Goonh at Bareilly, Bishop Heber<sup>37</sup>**

In our return to Bareilly, I saw some interesting animals: a fine covey of wild peacocks arose at some little distance; a mungoose or ichneumon crossed the track, and at Mr. Hawkins's door we found a beautiful and rare animal of the deer kind, which had just been sent him as a present from the hills. It is now about the size of a large fallow-deer, with upright horns, not palmated, but is still young, and is expected to grow so tall and stout as to bear a saddle. It is of a brown colour, mixed with grey and black, and its hair very thick, and as coarse and strong as hogs' bristles. Mr. Hawkins said he



thought it would turn the edge of a sword. It is a gentle and tame creature, eating from and licking the hands of any one who caresses it. It is called goonh, and is considered a great rarity in the plains, though among the mountains it is not uncommon, and sometimes used to carry the children of great men. It seems to be as yet unknown to European naturalists, at least I never heard the name, nor saw any drawing like it; were the horns palmed it would most resemble the elk.

### **7. The lion, Bishop Heber<sup>38</sup>**

The lion...is now ascertained to exist in considerable numbers in the districts of Saharunpoor and Loodianah. Lions have likewise been killed on this side the Ganges in the northern parts of Rohilcund, in the neighbourhood of Moradabad and Rampoor, as large, it is said, as the average of those in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope. Both lions, where they are found, and tygers, are very troublesome to the people of the villages near the forest, who having no elephants, have no very effectual means of attacking them with safety. The peasantry here, however, are not a people to allow themselves to be devoured without resistance, like the Bengalees; and it often happens that, when a tyger has established himself near a village, the whole population turn out, with their matchlocks, swords, and shields, to attack him. Fighting on foot, and compelled to drive him from his covert by entering and beating the jungle, one or two generally lose their lives, but the tyger seldom escapes; and Mr. Boulderson has seen some skins of animals of this description, which bore the strongest mark of having been fought with, if the expression may be used, hand to hand; and were in fact slashed over with cuts of the tulwar or short scimitar.

### **8. The Condor, Bishop Heber<sup>39</sup>**

Mr. Fisher had some drawings of different parts of the Dhoon, which represented scenery of very great beauty and luxuriance, on a smaller and less awful scale than Kemaon. The animals seem much the same; but Lieutenant Fisher gave me a fuller account than I had yet received of the eagle, or as, from his statement, it rather seems to be, the condor, of these mountains. It appears to belong to this latter tribe from the bareness of its neck, which resembles that of the vulture, and the character of its beak, which is longer and less hooked than the eagle's and perhaps, too, from its size, which exceeds that of any eagle of which I have heard. Lieutenant Fisher shot one very lately at Degra, which measured thirteen feet between the tips of its extended wings, and had talons eight inches long. He was of a deep black colour, with a bald head and neck, and appears strongly to resemble the noble bird described by Bruce as common among the mountains of Abyssinia, under the name of



“Nisser.” This is, no doubt, the bird which carries away the children from the streets of Almorah. The one which Mr. Fisher shot could, he was sure, have carried up a very well-grown boy. Nor have I any doubt that it is the “rok” of the Arabians. In Sindbad’s way of telling a story, so formidable an animal might be easily magnified into all which that ingenious voyager has handed down to us concerning his giant bird.

## **E. MINES**

### **1. Diamond mines, Captain Alexander Hamilton<sup>40</sup>**

The diamond mines being but a week’s journey from Fort St. George, make them pretty plentiful there; but few great stones are now brought to market there, since that great diamond which Governor Pitt sent to England. How he purchased it Mr. Glover, by whose means it was brought to the Governor, could give the best account, for he declared to me that he lost 3000 pagodas by introducing the seller to Mr. Pitt, having left so much money in Arcot as security, that if the stone was not fairly bought at Fort St. George, the owner should have free liberty to carry it where he pleased for a market; but neither the owner nor Mr. Glover was pleased with the Governor’s transactions in that affair.

#### **Working of the mines**

Some customs and laws at the mines are, when a person goes thither on that affair, he chooses a piece of ground, and acquaints one of the Moghul’s officers, who stay there for that service, that he wants so many covets of ground to dig in; but whether they agree for so much, or if the price be certain, I know not. However, when the money is paid, the space of ground is enclosed, and some sentinels placed round it. The Moghul challenges all stones that are found above a certain weight – I think it is about sixty grains; and if any stones be carried clandestinely away above the stipulated weight, the person guilty of the theft is punished with death. Some are fortunate, and get estates by digging, while others lose both their money and labour.

### **2. Gold at Alaknanda, William Moorcroft<sup>41</sup>**

Gold is found in some quantities in the sand of the river, particularly after a heavy fall of snow or rain in the neighbouring mountains. The men chiefly engaged in its extrication are from Nahan. Their apparatus consists of a wooden boat-shaped trough, two shallow trays of wood, a bamboo sieve, half a gourd, a little quicksilver, some pieces of skin, and scales and weights. The trough is four feet long, eighteen inches broad, and as many deep, with a hole near the bottom at one extremity. It is placed on the river edge, with the



end in which the hole is, somewhat depressed. The sieve is formed of straight pieces of split bamboo, laid side by side, and is laid across the trough. One of the two persons employed in the operation spreads a trayful of sand upon the sieve, and the other, turning up its edge so as to prevent any of the sand from being carried off, pours upon it a gourd full of water. This he repeats until the water having the finer particles of the sand in suspension, filters through the interstices of the sieve, and leaves the stones and pebbles and coarser substances on the surface. As a sufficient quantity of these washings accumulates in the bottom of the trough, the water drains off through the hole in its lower extremity, and the mud which is left is then again washed for the gold. For this purpose it is taken up in the wooden trays and fresh water poured upon it: the trays are then turned round by the hand, and the coarser and lighter portions separated and removed from the heavier and finer, until the largest grains of gold become visible, and can be extracted, when they are wrapped up in the pieces of skin. In order to recover the finer particles of the metal, the remaining portion of the sand is triturated with the quicksilver, and that again is driven off by heat. The operation is not source of great profit, as the washers gain, on an average, no more than four rupees a month. The gold, after fusion into a globule, is sold at the rate of six ratis weight for a Farokhabad rupee, or one tola of twelve mashas (about one hundred and seventy-three grains) for sixteen rupees. There were not above fifteen individuals engaged in this business when I was at Srinagar, but under proper encouragement it might afford a profitable occupation to hundreds.

### **3. Salt mines at Gumha, William Moorcroft<sup>42</sup>**

Gumha owes its erection in this spot to the vicinity of salt mines, into one of which I descended. A horizontal shaft, about four feet square, extended from the side of the hill about twenty yards, where pine trees cut into notches from steps led down a slope to a second, and thence to a third shaft; the latter was perpendicular, and was descended by a bamboo ladder to the bed of salt. The sides of the passage were protected by hides, and a stream of water ran along the bottom. Torches of pine wood lighted us down, but I could see little except a large cavity, the roof of which was formed of salt, and the bottom covered with shallow water. The salt occurs in solid masses in a rock of *grauwacke*, crossed by veins of quartz. As the art of boring is unknown, the mineral is discovered by digging. A horizontal gallery is cut from the face of the hill, and as it advances is roofed with deal spars supported by sections of the stem of the fir trees. If this, after passing some way, does not come upon the salt deposit, wells are sunk until it is found, and then other shafts are constructed accordingly. When the face of the bed is laid bare, a stream of water is conducted to it by trenches from some hill spring along the bottom of the



galleries, until it covers the surface of the bed. It lies there for one day. On the second the workmen cut grooves in the bed for the water to pass, and on the third day they break up the moistened salt, and carry it out of the pit. On the fourth it is conveyed to the public office, where it is sold to traders who come hither from all the neighbouring districts. The produce varies according to the season and the number of mines open.

#### **4. Iron ore at Monghir, Thomas Twining<sup>43</sup>**

...iron ore...abounds in the neighbouring hills [of Monghir]...This ore...is more precious than gold to the inhabitants of Monghir, sustaining by its abundant and cheap supplies an extensive manufactory of iron utensils of almost every description...

#### **5. Iron and salt mines at Mundi, G.T. Vigne<sup>44</sup>**

The iron mines of Mundi are said to be very rich. They are to be reached by ascending, for about twenty miles, the banks of the Beyas. I did not visit them; but the Rajah procured specimens of the ore, and presented them to me. The greater proportion of them were of the kind of ore known by the name of glanz (sparkling) iron, and which is found abundantly, I am told, in the Isle of Elba. The matrix seemed to be of quartz.

The salt mines of Barung are about eight miles distant in a straight line, for three of which the path follows down the course of the river. I thought them well worth the visit. The salt is dug out from the mural sides of a quarry, and also from mines of no great depth in the earth. It is contained in sandstone; and my specimens of the formation, as I am informed, bear a close resemblance to the salt sandstone at Dunglass in Scotland. The salt from the salt range on the Attok is so much purer as to prevent, I believe, any very large deportation of the article from Mundi; although the Mundi salt is to be found in the principal bazaars of the Panjab.

#### **6. "Mocha" Stones, Bishop Heber<sup>45</sup>**

In different parts of this province, particularly near the town of Kuppurgunge, are found numbers of cornelians and other pebbles, particularly of the kind called in England "mocha stones," which the shopkeepers of Cambay cut, polish, and set very neatly. The cornelians are always roasted in a strong fire before any thing is done to them; nor is it known, till this has taken place, whether they are worth any thing or no. The silversmiths of Cutch and Catteywar emboss very neatly, by filling the cup, watch-case, box or other vessel with gum-lac, and punching it in, to the figure required, with a small chisel. Major Sale shewed me a watch-case and small tankard, very prettily ornamented in this manner, with flowers, elephants, and different birds and animals. □



## **The People of India**

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- A. Description of people**
- B. Appearance and dress**
- C. Diet**
- D. Dwellings**
- E. Hospitality**
- F. Economic condition of people**
- G. Domestic servants**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF PEOPLE**

- 1. The state of morality among the Tamil people, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg [in his foreword of August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1708 to the translation of the Malabarian Moral Philosophy, *Nidi Wunpa*]<sup>1</sup>**

And when I saw not unfitting equations and life rules were therein contained, I considered it indicated to translate this from the Malabarian language into High German. Not that we Christians do not have sufficient rules of morality in the Holy Scriptures for us to learn them from mere heathens, but merely and solely to see to what extent a heathen, devoid of the Scriptures, and only by virtue of natural enlightenment, can attain cognition of the law of morality, and how those Malabarian heathens equal those former Latin and Greek heathens in this, nay even surpass them absolutely. He, who would be instructed in this in detail, might read the *Biblothecam Malabaricam*, composed by myself and now sent to Europe, likewise the other two little books of morals which I have translated from the Malabarian into the German and sent along at the same time.

- 2. Erudition of the Malabarian people, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg<sup>2</sup>**  
Most Christians in Europe are of such opinion as though the Malabarian



heathens were a rather barbarian people who know nothing of either erudition or moral ethics; yet all this stems from not having known their language properly and having jumped to conclusions from outward appearances. I myself must confess that when I first came among heathens, it was impossible for me to imagine that their language might be a language of proper rules and their life a proper life, but formed very many faulty conceptions on all their activity, believing that among them there were neither civil nor moral laws. For this reason I find it very easy to forgive those who have never been among these heathens and harbour similar erroneous views, since I was myself still inclined to them when I had already been with these heathens for some time; however, as soon as I had learned to understand their tongue a little and was able to talk with these heathens about this and that, I was gradually freed from this misconception and I was able to harbour far better ideas about them. When I finally gained the complete knowledge of being able to read their books, and found that among them those very philosophical disciplines were taught which were being exchanged among the scholars of Europe and that they have proper written laws from which all theological matters must be derived and demonstrated on; I was greatly astonished by this and conceived a great desire to learn as much as possible about their heathendom from their own writings. Thereafter, I got myself one book after another, sparing neither time nor expense until now at last I have got so far through the diligent reading of their books and through the continued discussion with their Brahmins or priests, that I know something definite about them and am able to reason about it. Yet this is a very vast field, so if one would write something detailed about it, one would require a great deal of time and large volumes.

### **3. Impact of climate on the people, Robert Orme<sup>3</sup>**

The texture of the human frame in India, seems to bear proportion with the rigidity of the northern monsoon, as that does with the distance from Tartary; but as in the southern monsoon heats are felt at the very foot of Mount Caucasus, intense as in any part of India, very few of the inhabitants of Indostan are endowed with the nervous strength, or athletic size, of the robustest nations of Europe....

As much as the labourer in Indostan is deficient in the capacity of exerting a great deal of strength at an onset, so is he endowed with a certain suppleness throughout all his frame, which enables him to work long in his own degree of labour; and which renders those contortions and postures, which would cramp the inhabitant of northern regions, no constraint to him. There are not more extraordinary tumblers in the world. Their messengers will go fifty miles a day, for twenty or thirty days without intermission. Their infantry march faster, and with less weariness, than Europeans; but could not march at all, if



they were to carry the same baggage and accoutrements.

Exceptions to this general defect of nervous strength are found in the inhabitants of the mountains which run in ranges of various directions throughout the continent of Indostan. In these, even under the tropic, Europeans have met with a savage whose bow they could scarcely draw to the head of a formidable arrow, tinged with the blood of tigers whose skins he offers to sale. Exceptions to the general placid countenance of the Indians, are found in the inhabitants of the woods, who, living chiefly on their chace, and perpetually alarmed by summons and attacks from the princes of the plains, for tributes withheld, or ravages committed, wear an air of dismay, suspicion, treachery, and wildness, which renders them hideous; and would render them terrible, if their physiognomy carried in it any thing of the fierceness of the mountaineer.

The stature of the Indian is various: the northern inhabitant is as tall as the generality of our own nation: more to the south their height diminishes remarkably; and on the coast of Coromandel we meet with many whose stature would appear dwarfish, if this idea was not taken off by the slimness and regularity of their figure. Brought into the world with a facility unknown to the labours of European women; never shackled in their infancy by ligatures; sleeping on their backs without pillows: they are in general very straight; and there are few deformed persons amongst them...

#### **4. Have not lost their original character, Robert Orme<sup>4</sup>**

This great extent of country has, from the earliest antiquity, been inhabited by a people who have no resemblance, either in their figures or manners, with any of the nations which are contiguous to them; and although these nations have at different times sent conquerors amongst them, who have established themselves in different parts of the country; although the Mogul Tartars under Tamerlane and his successors have at last rendered themselves lords of almost the whole of it, yet have the original inhabitants lost very little of their original character by these mixtures; contrary to the effects of conquest in all the Christian, and in most of the Mahomedan empires, in which Cyrus, Vercingetorix, and Caesar, if risen from the dead, could not distinguish any traces of the men who obeyed them in Persia, in Gaul, and in Italy; but this might Porus in India, on the very spot in which he submitted to Alexander.

#### **A common personality**

Besides the particular denominations which they receive from the casts and countries in which they are born, there is one more general, which is applied indiscriminately, to distinguish the original natives from all who have intruded themselves amongst them. Hindoo, from whence Indian, and throughout the millions of Indians which inhabit Indostan, although situated at such distances



as would suffice to form them into several distinct nations, are visible the strongest marks of one general character, in their dispositions, in their observances, and in their form.

### **5. Gentoos humane and gentle, Robert Orme<sup>5</sup>**

A people believing in metempsychosis, who are forbid by their religion to destroy the smallest insect; a people continually assembling to celebrate the festivals of their gods, who believe that acts of charity to the poor can atone for all their sins, who are fond to excess of the enjoyment of a domestic life, and extremely solicitous in the cares of it – such a people must acquire humane and gentle manners.

The Gentoos are very affectionate parents, and treat their domestics with great mildness. They are charitable, even to relieving the necessities of strangers: and the politeness of their behaviour is refined by the natural effeminacy of their disposition, to exceed even that of the Moors.

The sway of a despotic government has taught them the necessity of patience; and the coolness of their imagination enables them to practise it better than any people in the world. They conceive a contemptible opinion of a man's capacity, who betrays any impetuosity in temper.

Slavery has sharpened the natural finess of all the spirits of Asia. From the difficulty of obtaining, and the greater difficulty of preserving it, the Gentoos are indefatigable in business, and masters of the most exquisite dissimulation in all affairs of interest. They are the acutest buyers and sellers in the world, and preserve through all their bargains a degree of calmness, which baffles all the arts that can be opposed against it.

The children are capable of assisting them in their business at an age when ours scarce begin to learn. It is common to see a boy of eleven years into an assembly of considerable men, make his obeisance, deliver his message, and then retire with all the propriety and grace of a very well-bred man.

It has before been said, that the Gentoos in general are a very timorous people. In the northern parts of the empires they are of stronger bodies, ruder manners, and have scarce a religion, when it is compared to the multitude of ceremonies and observances which the southern Gentoos adhere so strictly to: here they are better soldiers, and sometimes take the field against the Moors, but rarely with success.

### **6. Guillaume le Gentil was on a scientific mission in the Indian seas to observe the celebrated transit of Venus predicted on 6 June, 1761. He observed the charm of the people<sup>6</sup>**

I doubt that there is another place on earth where one can be more relaxed



than in India, where the country offers you so much attraction and charm and where, at the same time, people are so gentle.

**7. Inoffensive people, *A Voyage To Calcutta In 1761*, author unknown<sup>7</sup>**

The Gentoos...are gentle, harmless, and inoffensive people; adhering strictly to their own ancient customs and manners, notwithstanding that the Moors, who conquered them, are most as numerous as themselves. Simple indeed in their diet, but not so in their tempers, being greatly addicted to overreaching, and they think it meritorious to impose on a white man. They are slender in their persons and very agreeable featured.

**8. 'An ornament to creation,' John Zephaniah Holwell<sup>8</sup>**

[The Hindus are] a people, who from the earliest times have been an ornament to the creation – if so much can with propriety be said of any known people upon earth.

**9. 'Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious...most easily conquered,' Alexander Dow<sup>9</sup>**

The Hindoos, or the followers of the Brahmin faith, are in number far superior to the Mahommedans in Hindustan. The system of religion which they profess is only perfectly known in the effect which it has upon the manners of the people. Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered. Their government, like that of all the inhabitants of Asia, is despotic; it is, in such a manner, tempered by the virtuous principles inculcated by their religion, that it seems milder than the most limited monarchy in Europe. Some of the reigning princes trace their families, with clearness, above four thousand years; many of them, in a dubious manner, from the dark period which we place beyond the flood. Revolution and change are things unknown; and assassinations and conspiracies never exist.

Penal laws are scarce known among the Hindoos; for their motives to bad actions are few. Temperate in their living, and delicate in their constitutions, their passions are calm, and they have no object but that of living with comfort and ease. Timid and submissive, from the coldness of a vegetable diet, they have a natural abhorrence to blood. Industrious and frugal, they possess wealth which they never use. Those countries, governed by native princes, which lay beyond the devastations of the Mahommedans, are rich, and cultivated to the highest degree. Their governors encourage industry and commerce; and it is to the ingenuity of the Hindoos, we owe all the fine manufactures in the East. During the empire of the Moguls, the trade of India was carried on by the followers of Brahma. The bankers, scribes, and managers of finance were native



Hindoos, and the wisest princes of the family of Timur protected and encouraged such peaceable and useful subjects.

#### **10. A strong and agile people, Fra Paolino Da Bartolomeo who was in India from 1776 to 1789<sup>10</sup>**

All the Grecian historians represent the Indians as people of greater size, and much more robust than those of other nations. Though this is not true in general, it is certain that the purity of the air, wholesome nourishment, temperance and education contribute, in an uncommon degree, to the bodily conformation, and to the increase of these people. Their new-born children lie always on the ground, as if they were thrown away or neglected; and they are never wrapped up with bandages, or confined in any other manner, as is done in Europe. Their limbs, therefore, can expand themselves without the least restraint; their nerves and bones become more solid; and when these children attain to the period of youth, they acquire not only a beautiful figure, but a sound, well turned, and robust bodily conformation. The frequent use of the cold bath, repeated rubbing the body with coconut oil and the juice of the *Ingia* plant, as well as their exercises, which have a great resemblance to the *Juvenilia*, and which I have often seen in Malabar, all contribute to increase their strength and agility. These advantages also are seldom lost, unless some of these young people abandon themselves to debauchery, or weaken their bodies by too great labour or excessive perspiration.

#### **11. A tranquil people, William Hodges<sup>11</sup>**

The natives first seen in India by a European voyager are Hindoos, the original inhabitants of the Peninsula. In this part of India they are delicately framed, their hands in particular are more like those of tender females; and do not appear to be, what is considered a proper proportion to the rest of the person, which is usually above the middle size. Correspondent to this delicacy of appearance are their manners, mild, tranquil, and sedulously attentive; in this last respect they are indeed remarkable, as they never interrupt any person who is speaking, but wait patiently till he has concluded; and then answer with the most perfect respect and composure.

#### **Simple and accommodating**

A surprising spirit of cleanliness is to be observed among the Hindoos: the streets of their villages are commonly swept and watered, and sand is frequently strewed before the doors of the houses. The simplicity, and perfectly modest character, of the Hindoo women, cannot but arrest the attention of a stranger. With downcast eye, and equal step, they proceed along, and scarcely turn to the right or to the left to observe a foreigner as he passes, however new



or singular his appearance. The men are no less remarkable for their hospitality, and are constantly attentive to accommodate the traveller in his wants. During the whole of the journey in my pallankeen, whatever I wanted, as boiling water for my tea, milk, eggs, &c. &c. I never met with imposition or delay, but always experienced an uncommon readiness to oblige, and that accompanied with manners the most simple and accommodating. In perfect opposition is the Mussulman character; –haughty, not to say insolent; irritable, and ferocious. I beg, however, to be understood of the lower classes; for a Moorish gentleman may be considered as a perfect model of a well-bred man. The Hindoos are chiefly husbandmen, manufacturers, and merchants, except two tribes – the Rajapoots, who are military, and the Brahmins, who are ecclesiastics. The Mussulmans may be classed as entirely military, as few of them exercise any other employment, except collecting the revenues, which under the Moorish governments have been always done by military force.

## **12. Preserved their traditions, the geographer, D'Anville who died in Paris in 1782<sup>12</sup>**

...the Indians, having never quitted their own country, have never mixed themselves with other people, we do not find that they have suffered at home any revolutions which have overset the constitution and custom of the country. The Scythians have formerly penetrated into India, and established themselves there; from thence it comes to pass, that we find Indo Scythia in the ancient Indostan. Several Mahomedan princes, and amongst others, Mahmud son of Sebah-takin, very zealous for Mussulmanism, have made conquests in India; and India has been governed for two centuries by a house whose origin is from Tartary, and whose religion is that of Mahomet. But these circumstances, which have unnaturalized, if we may be allowed the expression, other nations, have not had the same effect upon the Indians: they have preserved, besides several idioms which are proper to them, their religion and its ministers, Brachmans and Gymnosophists; their division into casts and tribes; distinguished every one by its profession, its rites and superstitions: in a word, all that is particular to themselves, and distinguishes them from other nations, since the earliest times.

## **13. Hindu simplicity a reason for their prosperity, Father Wendel<sup>13</sup>**

It should...be noted that this vogue, or rather vice, of cutting a great figure by the splendour of great expenditure is one of the contagions which the Moors or Mohammedans have introduced to and spread throughout Hindustan... For the most, it is just the contrary among the gentiles, that is to say, among those who in no way follow in the steps of the Moors. Although, in the general corruption which this monarchy has in the last years reached, one sees enough



in Delhi, the Indian Babylon, and elsewhere, who follow the court's example and whose children are today in the same indigence and misery as those whose conduct they have emulated. I speak of those gentiles who, having entered commerce, are remote from those employments which more or less entail luxury. These are little concerned with appearance and making a fuss in the world with a greater entourage or more numerous domestics or more excessive costs than they had seen in the houses of their fathers and forebears. One observes the same domestics, the same livery, the same meals and more or less the same expenses in their households, although their property increases and their riches multiply. And, it is in truth a matter worthy of attention that the gentiles pass on by descendance the same wealth, often augmented, while the Moors, and those who emulate them in their ways of living, deplete in little time the immense sums they have inherited, or which have come to their hands through fate. Temperance, sobriety and parsimony, as well as the science of commerce, must be sought in India amongst the gentiles. I would further say, that one finds antiquity respective of their food and clothing, in their general way of life, considering that one remarks therein simplicity, the surest and, I think, strongest proof of the most remote heritage. For, one must avow that the simplest and most natural usage which men make of things they need has been the first and only which they have embraced and through example transmitted to posterity. Many things of which we make today necessity are but luxury and corruption; whereas, one lived in another age just as content, and perhaps happier, without knowing of them.

#### **14. Finances of Muslim princes administered by Hindus, Father Wendel<sup>14</sup>**

It has been observed elsewhere (*vide Memoires des Pattans*) that this economy and parsimony of the majority of gentiles was the reason for which usually they, and not the Moors, were employed by the *nawabs* and mighty personages, even Mohammedans, for the farming out of taxes and revenues of their governments, as well as in private affairs. It is they who everywhere manage all kinds of expenditure. One might imagine that it is because of the arrogance of the Moors, who think themselves too noble to tend to such matters, if one did not know from experience that with a Mohammedan at the head of an administration, where the revenues would fall to him, the master must expect to be badly paid and, at the end of a few years, be ruined before he knew it. Everywhere in Hindustan, at all the courts, beginning with the royal houses and even in those of wealthy private individuals, the *divans*, or intendants, collectors, prosecutors, secretaries, inspectors, etc. are gentiles. It is to them that the Moors trust, putting in their hands the care and management of their affairs. The Moors, having consumed the revenues from the provinces of which



they had the intendancy with balls, feasts, equipages and entourages to make themselves believe to be sovereign lords of the country of which they were intendants, ceased then to be so, subsequently pursued by their masters when time came to account for the administration. Having sold the furniture, chattels and all things which one could confiscate (excepting on several occasions what one had been shrewd enough to place in security), they declared themselves *faqirs*, that is to say, weary of the world and resolved to leave it with the pretext of awaiting nothing more than a divine life, retired and removed from all troubles. A skullcap rather than a turban on the head, the simple habit or robe of a monk, reddish in hue, a rosary in place of sabre in hand, staff in the other, and what is more, the Koran under the arm, afforded immediate protection from the pursuit of the treasurer or other court representatives, as well as from the creditors. Rather like that race of privileged thieves in Europe who, establishing their success on the ruin of others, declare bankruptcy at an opportune moment to enjoy unmolested the fortune acquired through their devious and deceitful ways. The people of India are foolish enough to respect these rogues...

### **15. Of tranquil minds, William Macintosh<sup>15</sup>**

All history points to India as the mother of science and art. This country was anciently so renowned for knowledge and wisdom that the philosophers of Greece did not disdain to travel thither for their improvement...

The tranquility of their minds, even in the most trying circumstances, is expressed by a constant smile that sits gracefully on their placid countenances...the Hindoos are naturally the most inoffensive of all mortals...In Asia, particularly in India, both on this side and beyond the Ganges, there is a scrupulous tenacity of ancient customs and manners...

In refinement and ease [the Hindus] are superior to any people to the westward of them. In politeness and address, in gracefulness of deportment, and speech, an Indian is as much superior to a Frenchman of fashion, as a French courtier is to a Dutch burgo-master of Dort... The Hindoos, especially those of the higher Castes, are in their demeanor easy and unconstrained...but their ease and freedom is reserved, modest, and respectful... An Indian [is polite] because he respects you.

### **16. Hindus possessed valuable knowledge in the past, George Forster<sup>16</sup>**

When this empire, its polished people, and the progress which science had made amongst them, are attentively considered; when, at the same period, a retrospective view is thrown on the states of the European world, then immersed in, or emerging from, ignorance and barbarity, we must behold Hindostan with wonder and respect; and we may assert without forfeiting the



claims of truth and moderation, that, however far the European world now outstrips the nations of the East, the followers of Brimha in the early period of life, were possessed of a fund amply stored with valuable materials of philosophy and useful knowledge. The humane mind will naturally feel a sense of sorrow and pity for a people, who have fallen from so conspicuous a height of glory and fortune, and who probably have contributed to polish and exalt the nations, who now hold them in subjection.

### **Crushed by invaders**

Hindustan was overthrown by a fierce race of men, who in their rapid course of conquest, exerted the most furious efforts in leveling every monument of worship and taste. They massacred the priests and plundered the temples, with a keenness and ferocity, in which their first chiefs might have gloried. A people thus crushed, groaning under the load of oppression, and dismayed at the sight of incessant cruelties, must soon have lost the spirit of science, and the exertion of genius; especially as the fine arts, were so blended with their system of religion, that the persecution of the one, must have shed a baneful influence on the existence of the other. To decide on, or affix, the character of the Hindoo, from the point of view in which he is now beheld, would, in a large degree, be similar to the attempt of conveying an exact idea of ancient Greece, from the materials now presented by the wretched country....

### **17. Civilisation earlier than Egyptian, George Forster<sup>17</sup>**

The capacious space which Hindostan occupies on the face of the globe, the advantages it derives from soil and climate, and from its numerous rivers, some of them of the first class of magnitude, may be adduced as reasonable arguments of its having been peopled at a more early period of time than Egypt, which does not possess the like local benefits. If the degree of perfection which manufactures have attained, be received as a criterion to judge of the progress of civilization, and if it be also admitted as a test of deciding on the antiquity of a people, who adopt no foreign improvements, little hesitation would occur, in bestowing the palm of precedence on Hindostan, whose fabrics of the most delicate and beautiful contexture, have been long held in admiration, and have hitherto stood unrivalled. Let me conclude this comparative view, with observing, and I trust dispassionately, that when we see a people possessed of an ample stock of science of well digested ordinances, for the protection and improvement of society – and of a religion whose tenets consist of the utmost refinement, and variety of ceremony – and, at the same time, observe amongst other Asiatic nations, and the Egyptians of former times, but partial distributions of knowledge, law, and religion – we must be led to entertain a supposition, that the proprietors of the lesser, have been supplied from the sources of the greater fund...



**18. 'Liberal minded,' the anonymous author of *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), believed to be a young woman who wrote a year or two after her return to Britain<sup>18</sup>**

If there are, as some tenets imply, a distinction of heavenly situations, will not this good-minded people occupy the first in rank; for nearest to the divine attributes of any thing you can have a conception of, is their kind-heartedness and probity.

In a word, their manners are highly interesting, from their simplicity and liberal-mindedness; and I blush to feel how superior to all that Christianity can boast, of peace and goodwill towards men.

... I felt myself in danger of becoming a *Braminate*, though all the wealth of Indostan could not bribe me to become a Mahometan.

**19. *Contribution of Hindus*, Sir William Jones<sup>19</sup>**

The Hindus are said to have boasted of three inventions, all of which, indeed, are admirable, the method of instructing of apologues, the decimal scale adopted now by all civilised nations, and the game of chess, on which they have some curious treatises; but, if their numerous works on grammar, logick, rhetorick, musick, all which are extant and accessible, were explained in some language generally known, it would be found, that they had yet higher pretensions to the praise of a fertile and inventive genius. Their lighter poems are lively and elegant; their epick, magnificent and sublime in the highest degree; their *Puranas* comprise a series of mythological histories in blank verse from the Creation to the supposed incarnation of Buddha; and their *Vedas*, as far as we can judge from that compendium of them, which is called *Upanishat*, abound with noble speculations in metaphysicks, and fine discourses on the being and attributes of God. Their most ancient medical book, entitled *Chereca* [Charak], is believed to be the work of Siva; for each of the divinities in their Triad has at least one sacred composition ascribed to him; but, as to mere human works on history and geography, though they are said to be extant in Cashmir, it has not been yet in my power to procure them. What their astronomical and mathematical writings contain, will not, I trust, remain long a secret: they are easily procured, and their importance cannot be doubted. The philosopher, whose works are said to include a system of the universe founded on the principle of attraction and the central position of the sun, is named Yavan Acharya, because he had travelled, we are told, into Ionia: if this be true, he might have been one of those, who conversed with Pythagoras; this at least is undeniable, that a book on astronomy in Sanscrit bears the title of *Yavana Jatica*, which may signify the Ionick Sect; nor is it improbable, that the names of the planets and Zodiacal stars, which the Arabs borrowed from the Greeks, but which we find in the oldest Indian records, were originally



devised of the same ingenious and enter-prizing race, from whom both Greece and India were peopled...

## **20. India early civilised, William Robertson<sup>20</sup>**

Whoever...wishes to trace the commerce with India to its source must search for it, not so much in any peculiarity of the natural productions of that country, as in the superior improvement of its inhabitants. Many facts have been transmitted to us, which, if they are examined with proper attention, clearly demonstrate that the natives of India were not only more early civilised, but had made greater progress in civilization than any other people...

By the ancient Heathen writers, the Indians were reckoned among those races of men which they denominated *Autochthones* or *Aborigines*, whom they considered as natives of the soil, whose origin could not be traced. By the inspired writers, the wisdom of the East (an expression which is to be understood as a description of their extraordinary progress in science and arts) was early celebrated...

## **21. 'Lamentably degenerate,' the Evangelist, Charles Grant, who was the first to advocate the Christianization and Anglicization of India<sup>21</sup>**

Upon the whole, then, we cannot avoid recognizing in the people of Hindostan, a race of men lamentably degenerate and base, retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation, yet obstinate in their disregard of what they know to be right, governed by malevolent and licentious passions, strongly exemplifying the effects produced on society by great and general corruption of manners, and sunk in misery by their vices, in a country peculiarly calculated by its natural advantages to promote the happiness of its inhabitants.

## **22. Cheerful yet sober, Quintin Craufurd<sup>22</sup>**

The Hindoos are naturally cheerful, and are fond of conversation, of play, and of sports. They will spend almost the whole night in seeing dancing, and hearing music; yet none dance but the women, whose profession it is, and who devote themselves to the pleasure and amusement of the public.

They are nevertheless extremely sober; they eat only twice a day, in the morning and evening....

The Hindoos are great observers of decorum; their manners are unaffected; they possess much natural politeness, and have an extraordinary degree of caution in not saying or doing any thing which they imagine may offend. The Brahmans in general shew the least civility, which is owing to the precedence they assume over the other casts, and the deference that is continually shewn them.



**23. Hindus immersed in impurity, Rev. William Carey of the Serampore trio who were critical of native customs<sup>23</sup>**

No people can have more surrendered their reason. In business they are not deficient, but in religion they seem without understanding. But a people can hardly be better than their gods. They have made themselves idols after their own hearts. Hindus have not the fierceness of American Indians, but this is abundantly made up for by cunning and deceit. Moral rectitude makes no part of their religious system; no wonder, therefore, they are immersed in impurity.

**24. Hindus a self sufficient people, Sir Thomas Munro<sup>24</sup>**

No nation will take from another what it can furnish cheaper and better itself. In India, almost every article which the inhabitants require, is made cheaper and better than in Europe. Among these are all cotton and silk manufactures, leather, paper, domestic utensils of brass and iron, and implements of agriculture. Their coarse woolens though bad, will always keep their ground from their superior cheapness; their finer camblets are warmer and more lasting than ours... Their simple mode of living dictated both by caste and climate, renders all our furniture and ornaments for the decoration of the house and the table utterly unserviceable to the Hindus: living in low mud houses, eating on the bare earth, they cannot require the various articles used among us. They have no tables; their houses are not furnished, except those of the rich, which have a small carpet, or a few mats and pillows. The Hindus eat alone, many from caste in the open air, others under sheds, and out of leaves of trees in preference to plates. But this is the picture, perhaps, of the unfortunate native reduced to poverty by European oppression under the Company's monopoly? No, it is equally that of the highest and richest Hindu in every part of India. It is that of the Minister of State. His dwelling is little better than a shed; the walls are naked, and the mud floor, for the sake of coolness, is every morning sprinkled with a mixture of water and cow-dung. He has no furniture in it. He distributes food to whoever wants it, but he gives no grand dinners to his friends. He throws aside his upper garments, and with nothing but a cloth around his loins, he sits down half-naked, and eats his meal alone, upon the bare earth, and under the open sky.

**25. Thomas Munro writing in 1807 on native character<sup>25</sup>**

There is such a strange mixture of fraud and honesty in the natives of India, and even in the same individuals, in different circumstances, that none but a native can, on many occasions, penetrate the motives from which such opposite conduct arises. The numerous petty dealings constantly going on, with comparatively very few disputes, the frequency of depositing money and



valuable articles without any kind of voucher, and the general practice of lending money without any kind of receipt or document but the accounts of the parties, manifest a high degree of mutual confidence, which can originate only in a conviction of the probity of each other. But, on the other hand, every native will perjure himself. In every litigation respecting water, boundaries of villages, and privileges of caste – in all these cases, he never speaks the truth, unless from the accident of its being on the side which he conceives himself bound to espouse. He will also perjure himself (not uniformly indeed, yet with little hesitation) in favour of a relation a friend, or an inhabitant of the same village; and even in favour of persons in whose welfare he has apparently no concern. These causes, added to bribery, render perjury so common, that scarcely any dependence can be placed upon evidence, unless where it is supported by collateral proofs. The number of witnesses, and even their general character, is therefore of less consequence than an acquaintance with those particulars, customs, and prejudices by which their evidence is likely to be biased.

## **26. 'Misrepresented by some divines,' Captain Thomas Williamson<sup>26</sup>**

[Indians were, on the whole], a race whose intellectual qualities, whatever may be said by ignorant or designing men, are at least on a par with those of Europeans. (Not that they did not have a share of human depravity, but they were not) so debased, so immoral, or so vindictive, as they have been represented by many gentlemen, especially some divines who have lately returned from the East, and whose opinions breathe by no means the spirit of that sublime religion they would coerce the natives to adopt. Taking all points into consideration, and viewing the nature of the country conjointly with the nature of their laws, and of their former government, I think we have by far more to admire than to censure, in a race of people, who, notwithstanding some highly remarkable instances of depravity, may be classed among the most innocent, and most industrious, of worldly inhabitants!!!

## **27. Need to awaken the Hindus to their treasures, Maria Graham<sup>27</sup>**

...perhaps I should be ashamed to own that I had so far strayed from good-nature and good-sense, as to forget, that whatever reproaches may be deserved by some of the Hindus for their moral practices the fundamental principles of morality itself are so firmly implanted in the soul of man that no vicious practice and no mistaken code can change their nature...

Our missionaries are very apt to split upon this rock, and in order to place our religion in the brightest light, as if it wanted their feeble aid, they lay claim exclusively to all the sublime maxims of morality and tell those they wish to convert, that their own books contain nothing but abominations,



the belief of which they must abandon in order to receive the purer doctrine of Christianity. Mistaken men! Mistaken men! Could they desire a better opening to their hopes than to find already established that morality which says, it is enjoined to man even at the moment of destruction to wish to benefit his foes, 'as the sandal tree in the instant of its overthrow sheds perfume on the axe that fells it.'...

In short, I consider morality like the sciences and arts, to be only slumbering not forgotten in India; and that to awaken the Hindus to a knowledge of the treasures in their own hands is the only thing wanting to set them fairly in the course of improvement with other nations.

Everywhere in the ancient Hindu books we find the maxims of that pure and sound morality which is founded on the nature of man as a rational and social being....

The Hindus claim the honour of having invented the method of teaching by apologues...

### **28. Venerate gods of other religions, Maria Graham<sup>28</sup>**

A stranger in India will not fail to be struck with the indiscriminate respect which the lower classes of Hindus pay to the objects worshipped by all other sects. I have seen them making their little offerings, and joining the processions at the Mussulman feasts of Hassan and Hossein, and as frequently appearing at the doors of the Romish Portuguese chapels, with presents of candles to burn before the saints, and flowers to adorn the shrines; in short, whatever is regarded as holy by others, they approach with reverence, so much are uncultivated men the creatures of imitation and habit.

### **29. Lady Nugent observes the mildness of native character while driving through a village in the neighbourhood of Calcutta<sup>29</sup>**

I cannot help remarking the extreme mildness of the native character. Every one seems to walk slowly and lightly; all speak low, even in the market; there is a sort of gentleness in their voice and manner – those who were not employed sat squatting at their doors, smoking their hookahs. The games of the children seem to partake of the native character; they, too, squat, in little parties, about the doors, and, though they look lively, you scarcely ever hear their little voices, and none of their amusements appear at all of a riotous nature.

### **30. A spiritual people, Anne Elwood<sup>30</sup>**

The Hindoos, apparently not having Gods enough of their own, worship those of other sects whenever they come in their way.

They also appear to observe not only their own festivals, but those of



the Christians and Mahometans, and indeed the whole year round was nothing but a succession of different mysteries and mummary, in honour of some Saint, or of some holiday....

The Hindoos must certainly have the organ of veneration very strongly developed, for not only do they perform poojah to their own deities, but they are very ready also to join in the religious rites of other nations; they will follow the Mussulman's taboot, and at our Christmas, they will bring an offering of cakes, flowers, and sugar-candy to the Christian Sahib...

### **31. A simple people, Bishop Heber<sup>31</sup>**

I was, indeed, prepared to expect a much greater simplicity and homeliness of manners in the Rajpoots and tribes of central India, than in those who had been subjects of Mogul empire, and, even at the court of Jyepoor, I was struck with the absence of that sort of polish which had been apparent at Lucknow and Delhi. The Hindoos seem every where, when left to themselves and under their own sovereigns, a people of simple tastes and tempers, inclined to frugality, and indifferent to show and form. The subjects of even the greatest Maharatta prince sit down without scruple in his presence, and no trace is to be found in their conversation of those adulatory terms which the Mussulmans introduced into the northern and eastern provinces.

### **32. Strong tradition of self-government, W. H. Sleeman<sup>32</sup>**

There is perhaps no part of the world where the communities of which the society is composed have been left so much to self-government as in India.... The village communities were everywhere left almost entirely to self-government; and the virtues of truth and honesty, in all their relations with each other, were indispensably necessary to enable them to govern themselves. A common interest often united a good many village communities in a bond of union, and established a kind of brotherhood over extensive tracts of richly cultivated land. Self-interest required that they should unite to defend themselves against attacks with which they were threatened at every returning harvest in a country where every prince was a robber upon a scale more or less large according to his means, and took the field to rob while the lands were covered with the ripe crops upon which his troops might subsist... Though, in their relations with each other, all these village communities spoke as much truth as those of any other communities in the world; still, in their relation with the Government, they told as many lies; – for falsehood, in the one set of relations, would have incurred the odium of the whole of their circles of society – truth, in the other, would often have involved the same penalty. If a man had told a lie to *cheat* his neighbour, he would have become an object of hatred and contempt – if he told a lie to *save* his neighbour's fields from an increase



of rent or tax, he would have become an object of esteem and respect. If the Government officers were asked whether there was any truth to be found among such communities, they would say, No, *that the truth was not in them*; because they would not cut each other's throats by telling them the real value of each other's fields.

### **33. Public spirit of Hindus, W. H. Sleeman<sup>33</sup>**

If by the term public spirit be meant a disposition on the part of individuals to sacrifice their own enjoyments, or their own means of enjoyment, for the common good, there is perhaps no people in the world among whom it abounds so much as among the people of India. To live in the grateful recollections of their countrymen for benefits conferred upon them in great works of ornament and utility is the study of every Hindoo of rank and property. Such works tend, in his opinion, not only to spread and perpetuate his name in this world, but, through the good wishes and prayers of those who are benefited by them, to secure the favour of the Deity in the next.

According to their notions, every drop of rain-water or dew that falls to the ground from the green leaf of a fruit-tree, planted by them for the common good, proves a refreshing draught for their souls in the next [world]. When no descendant remains to pour the funeral libations in their name, the water from the trees they have planted for the public good is destined to supply its place. Everything judiciously laid out to promote the happiness of their fellow-creatures will in the next world be repaid to them ten-fold by the Deity.

In marching over the country in the hot season, we every morning find our tents pitched on the green sward amid beautiful groves of fruit-trees, with wells of 'pakka' (brick or stone) masonry, built at great expense, and containing the most delicious water; but how few of us ever dream of asking at whose cost the trees that afford us and our followers such agreeable shade were planted, or the wells that afford us such copious streams of fine water in the midst of dry, arid plains were formed! We go on enjoying all the advantages which arise from the *noble public spirit* that animates the people of India to benevolent exertions, without once calling in question the truth of the assertion of our metropolitan friends that 'the people of India have no public spirit.'...

### **34. 'A most perfect and enviable command of countenance,' Marianne Postans<sup>34</sup>**

The Hindoo character is highly deserving minute study; for I know no other people who resemble them, or any known principles to which their peculiarities can be referred. The Hindoo has a most perfect and enviable command of countenance: whether in joy or sorrow, he never betrays feelings he may desire to conceal; and the calm and serene appearance of his features,



would induce an observer to believe him an apathetic being, whom the ordinary passions of our nature could not assail. Yet, how superficial is this judgment! See him in his temples, joining in some of the wild and startling ceremonies of his idol worship, his eye kindling with enthusiasm, and his form writhing with excitement before the altars of his gods; see him at his festivals, garlanded with flowers, covered with unguents and perfumes, half mad with mirth, shouting and feasting in these joyous saturnalia: and then wonder, as we must, at the calm eye, and quiet aspect of the Hindoo, in his usual and public bearing.

### **35. Have no fear of death, Marianne Postans<sup>35</sup>**

The absence of that fear of death, which is so powerful in the hearts of civilised men, is the most remarkable trait in the Hindu character; as a subject of contemplation and enquiry, this has great interest. Probably the inhabitants of civilised nations set an undue value on life...

## **B. APPEARANCE AND DRESS**

### **1. Of copper or olive colour, Robert Orme<sup>36</sup>**

The colour of the Indians is generally either that of copper or of the olive, but both with various shades. It is not absolutely the proximity of the inhabitant to the equator, that determines his complexion in India; other physical causes, from differences which arise as by starts in regions equally distant from the sun, and it is in their complexion that less national generality is found, than in any other of the properties of their figure: some are almost black; but these are either inhabitants of the woods, or people inured to labour and fatigues uncommon to the rest of their countrymen.

#### **Distinguishable from others**

The hair of the Indians is without exception long, fine, and of a jet black. The nose, if not always aquiline, is never buried in the face, nor with large distorted nostrils, as in the Coffrees of Africa, and in the Malay nations. Their lips, though in general larger than in Europeans, have nothing of that disagreeable protuberancy projecting beyond the nose, which characterizes the two people just mentioned. The eyebrows are full in the men, slender in the women, well-placed in both. The eyelid is of the finest form, – long, neither opening circularly, as in many of the inhabitants of France, nor scarce opening at all, as in the Chinese. The iris is always black, but rarely with lustre, excepting in their children, and in some of their women: nor is the white of the eye perfectly clear from a tinge of yellow; their countenance therefore receives little animation, but rather a certain air of languor, from this feature.



From the nostrils to the middle of the upper lip they have an indenture, strongly marked by two ridges, seldom observable in the northern Europeans, but often in the Spaniard and Portuguese; and from the middle of the under lip there is another such indenture, which loses itself a little above the chin: these lines, chiefly remarked in persons of their habits, give an air of sagacity to the men, and of delicacy to the physiognomy of the women. The outline of the face is various, oftener oval than of any other form, particularly in the women; and this variety of outline is another of the principal characters which distinguisheth the Indian from the Tartar as well as Malay; whose faces are universally of the same shape; that is, as broad as they are long.

## **2. Straight and elegant, William Macintosh<sup>37</sup>**

Their persons are straight and elegant, their limbs finely proportioned, their fingers long and tapering, their countenances open and pleasant, and their features exhibit the most delicate lines of beauty in the females, and in the males a kind of manly softness. Their walk and gait, as well as their whole deportment, is in the highest degree graceful.

## **DRESS**

## **3. Wear little, Robert Orme<sup>38</sup>**

The want of raiment is scarce an inconvenience; and the most wealthy remain by choice almost naked, when in their own families and free from the intercourse of strangers; so that all the manufacturers of cloth, for which India is so famous, derive more from the decency of their character; the luxurious taste of a rich and enervated people; and from the spirit of commerce which has prevailed among them from time immemorial; than from wants really felt; and if the manufacture of a piece of cloth was not the least laborious task in which a man can be employed in India, it is probable that the whole nation would at this day be as naked as their Gymnosophists, of which the ancients say so much and knew so little.

## **4. Dress in Kashmir, George Forster<sup>39</sup>**

The dress of the Kashmirians consists of a large turban, awkwardly put on; a great woolen vest, with wide sleeves; and a sack, wrapped in many folds round the middle; under the vest, which may be properly called a wrapper, the higher class of people wear a pirahun, or shirt, and drawers; but the lower order have no under garment, nor do they even gird up their loins...

The dress of the women is no less awkward than that of the men, and is ill adapted to display the beauties they naturally possess. Their outward, and, often, only garment, is of cotton, and shaped like a long loose shirt. Over the



hair, which falls in a single braid, they wear a close cap, usually of a woollen cloth, of a crimson colour; and to the hinder part of it is attached a triangular piece of the same stuff, which, falling on the back, conceals much of the hair. Around the lower edge of the cap is rolled a small turban, fastened behind with a short knot, which seemed to me the only artificial ornament about them. You will be pleased to notice, that I speak of the dress of the ordinary women, such only being permitted to appear in public. The women of the higher classes are never seen abroad; nor is it consistent with the usage of any Mahometan nation, even to speak of the female part of a family.

### **5. The kangri, William Moorcroft<sup>40</sup>**

The dress of the people, both male and female, commonly consists of a long loose wrapper and trowsers, the former of woollen cloth. As a further protection against the cold in winter the Kashmirians usually carry under their tunic an earthen pot with a small quantity of live charcoal, a practice that invariably discolours and sears the skin, and not unfrequently occasions palsy.

#### **Hindu women never veiled**

The Hindu women never go veiled, and never affect concealment, either at home or abroad.

### **6. Dress of Kolis, Bishop Heber<sup>41</sup>**

They are hardy, stout men, particularly those of the Catteywar and Cutch districts. Their usual dress is a petticoat round the waist, like that of the Bheels, and a cotton cloth wrapped round their heads and shoulders, which, when they wish to be smart, they gather up into a very large white turban. In cold weather, or when drest, they add a quilted cotton kirtle, or "lebada," over which they wear a shirt of mail, with vant-braces and gauntlets, and never consider themselves as fit to go abroad without a sword, buckler, bow and arrows, to which their horsemen add a long spear and battle-axe. The cotton lebada is generally stained and iron-moulded by the mail shirt, and, as might be expected, these marks, being tokens of their martial occupation, are reckoned honourable, insomuch that their young warriors often counterfeit them with oil or soot, and do their best to get rid as soon as possible of the burgher-like whiteness of a new dress. This is said to be the real origin of the story told by Hamilton, that the Coolies despise and revile all cleanly and decent clothing as base and effeminate. In other respects they are fond of finery; their shields are often very handsome, with silver bosses, and composed of rhinoceros-hide; their battle-axes richly inlaid, and their spears surrounded with many successive rings of silver. Their bows are like those of the Bheels, but stronger, and in better order; and their arrows are carried in a quiver of red and embroidered leather.



**7. Maratha dress, Fanny Parkes<sup>42</sup>**

The Mahratta dress consists only of two garments, which are a tight body to the waist, with sleeves tight to the elbow; a piece of silk, some twenty yards or more in length, which they wind around them as a petticoat, and then, taking a part of it, draw it between the limb and fasten it behind in a manner that gives it the effect both of petticoat and trousers; this is the whole dress unless, at times, they substitute *angiyas*, with short sleeves, for the tight long-sleeved body.

**8. Dress in Upper Assam, William Griffith<sup>43</sup>**

Upper Assam, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> [1836] – We arrived at Kujoo, a rather large village of Singfos, and within half a day's journey of which the tea is found in its native state...The people themselves are fair, much like the Burmese, but still quite distinct. The male dress resembles the Burmese much; the females is more distinct, consisting chiefly of a sort of gown; and whilst tattooing is confined to the males in Burma, it here appears to be indulged in chiefly by the ladies; all the legs I saw during the day, being ornamented with rings of tattoo. The men are a stout, rather fine race; free, easy, and independent, and great admirers of *grog* in every form.

**9. Hair styles, Honoria Lawrence<sup>44</sup>**

There is no part of the costume where the natives shew such variety of taste as in the arranging of the hair. And this does not as far as I can see depend on religious distinction. Some cover the head with a load of folded cloth, others wear no covering on it, and have the hair cropped close. Some wear little caps and the hair reaching down to the shoulders, where it is cut square across. Others have a broad line shaven from the forehead to the nape of the neck, and others cut off the hair above the forehead from ear to ear. And it is not uncommon to see the whole head shaven except one long tuft on the crown. The Mussulmanns have generally fine beards. But the Hindoos almost always shave theirs.

**10. Children go naked, Honoria Lawrence<sup>45</sup>**

The children when very young go about absolutely naked with long hair, their ankles and wrists adorned with silver, tin or coloured glass. Up to ten or twelve, they wear only a waist-cloth and piece of cotton round their shoulders. At this age they are generally much disfigured but the collyrium which is applied within the eyelid and gives to the eyes for a long time a weak and bleared appearance. The swarms of children in every village are absolutely astounding, outdoing Ireland over and over.



## C. DIET

### 1. Rice and wheat common food, Robert Orme<sup>46</sup>

The savage, by his chace and the perpetual war in which he lives with the elements, is enabled to devour almost raw the flesh of the animals he has killed. In more civilised nations, the plowman from his labour is enabled to digest in its coarsest preparations the wheat he has sown. Either of these foods would destroy the common inhabitant of Indostan, as he exists at present: his food is rice.

To provide this grain, we see a man of no muscular strength carrying a plough on his shoulder to the field, which the season or reservoirs of water have overflowed. This slender instrument of his agriculture, yoked to a pair of diminutive and feeble oxen, is traced, with scarce the impression of a furrow, over the ground, which is afterwards sown. The remaining labour consists in supplying the field with water; which is generally effected to no greater a toil than undamming the canals, which derive from the great reservoir. If in some places this water is drawn from wells, in most parts of India it is supplied by rain; as the rice in those parts, when the rainy season is of two or three months duration, is always sown just before this season begins. When reaped, the women separate the grain from the husk in wooden mortars, or it is trampled by oxen. Instead of hedges, the field is inclosed with a slender bank of earth.

A grain obtained with so little labour, has the property of being the most easily digestible of any preparation use for food, and is therefore the only proper one for such an effeminate race as I have described. There is wheat in India; it is produced only in the sharper regions, where rice will not so easily grow, and where the cultivator acquires a firmer fibre than the inhabitant of the plain. It was probably introduced with the *Alcoran*, as all the Mahomedans of northern extraction prefer it to rice, as much as an Indian rejects a nourishment which he cannot well digest even in its finest preparation.

### 2. Water, spices, vegetables, Robert Orme<sup>47</sup>

Water is the only drink of every Indian respectable enough to be admitted into their assemblies of public worship, as all inebriating liquors are forbore through a principle of religion; not that the soil is wanting in productions proper to compose the most intoxicating, nor themselves in the art of preparing them for the outcasts of their own nation, or others of persuasions different from their own, who chuse to get drunk. They have not equally been able to refrain from the use of spices and these the hottest, without which they never make a meal. Ginger is produced in their gardens as easily as radishes are in ours; and chilli, the highest of all vegetable productions used for food, insomuch that it will blister the skin, grows spontaneously: these, with



turmeric, are the principal ingredients of their cookery, and by their plenty are always within the reach of the poorest. A total abstinence from animal food is not so generally observed amongst them as is imagined; even the Bramins will eat fish; but as they never prepare either fish or flesh without mixing them with much greater quantities of spices than Europeans suffer in their ragouts, animal food never makes more than the slightest portion of their meal, and the preference of vegetables, of which they have various kinds in plenty is decisively marked amongst them all. The cow is sacred every where: milk, from a supposed resemblance with the 'amortam' or nectar of their gods, is religiously esteemed the purest of foods, and receives the preference to vegetables in their nourishment.

If the rice harvest should fail, which sometimes happens in some parts of India, there are many other resources to prevent the inhabitant from perishing: there are grains of a coarser kind and larger volume than rice, which require not the same continuation of heat, and at the same time the same supplies of water, to be brought to perfection: there are roots, such as the Indian potatoe, radish, and others of the turnip kind, which without manure acquire a larger size than the same species of vegetables in Europe, when assisted with all the arts of agriculture, although much inferior to those of Peru, of which Garcilaffa della Vega gives so astonishing a description: there are ground fruits of the pumpkin and melon kind, which come to maturity with the same facility, and of which a single one is sufficient to furnish a meal for three persons, who receive sufficient nourishment from this slender diet. The fruit-trees of other countries furnish delicacies to the inhabitant, and scarcely any thing more; in India there are many which furnish at once a delicacy and no contemptible nourishment: the palm and the coco trees give in their large nuts a gelatinous substance, on which men, when forced to the experience by necessity, have subsisted for fifty days: the jack-tree produces a rich, glewy, and nutritive fruit: the papa and the plantain-tree grow to perfection, and give their fruit within the year: the plantain, in some of its kinds, supplies the place of bread, and in all is of excellent nourishment. These are not all the presents which the luxuriant hand of nature gives as food to the inhabitant of India... The sun forbids the use of fuel in any part of the year, as necessary to procure warmth; and what is necessary to dress their victuals, is chiefly supplied by the dung of their cows.

### **3. Don't eat food touched by others, *A Voyage To Calcutta In 1761*, author unknown<sup>48</sup>**

Should any European enter their houses, they imagine them to be the polluted: neither will they eat or drink anything that has been touched by Europeans, or even Moors, who they hate – and not without reason, for they



are a lazy, haughty people, oppressing without mercy where they have any power.

#### **4. Food in Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>49</sup>**

The food of those who can afford it is partly of meat, mutton of goats or sheep, which sells at about three pence per pound. Beef is not procurable, as the Sikh ruler punishes the death of a cow capitally. The chief food of the people is vegetable; turnips, cabbages, and radishes, the *Sinhara*, or water-nut, and rice. The turnips are purple, or reddish, and speedily become woolly: the radishes are mostly white and strong: the cabbages do not head, but the leaves are frequently stripped. Besides these, lettuces, spinach, and other common vegetables are in extensive use, boiled into a sort of soup, with a little salt, or even the leaves of the dandelion, dock, plantain, and mallow; and the catkins of the walnut are employed as food, seasoned with a little salt, mustard, and walnut oil...

##### **Sinhara, or water-nut**

Another principle article of the food of the common people, the *Sinhara*, or water-nut, grows abundantly in the different lakes in the vicinity of the capital, and especially in the Wular lake, which yields an average return of ninety-six to a hundred and twenty thousand ass-loads a year. It is fished up from the bottom in small nets, and affords employment to the fishermen for several months. It constitutes the almost only food of at least thirty thousand persons for five months in the year. After being extracted from the shell the nuts are eaten, raw, boiled, roasted, fried, or dressed in various ways, after being reduced to flour. The most common preparation is boiling one ser of the flour with two quarts of water, so as to form a sort of gruel, which, though insipid, is nutritive. The *Sinhara*, in the shell, is sold in about a rupee per load.

##### **Lotus Stem**

Another article of food derived from the lakes is the stem of the *Nymphaea Lotus*. In the autumn, after the plate of the leaf has begun to decay, this has acquired maturity, and, being boiled till tender, furnishes a wholesome and nutritious article, which supports, perhaps, five thousand persons in the city for nearly eight months.

#### **5. Diet of people of Kumaon, Bishop Heber<sup>50</sup>**

Of the poverty of these people, however, I had no idea till I this day saw the bread they eat. It is the grain of a kind of holcus, and looks like clover-seed: the flour, bran, husk and all, is made into thick coarse cakes, like those for elephants, and these are not baked as the elephants' bread is, but laid on



the fire and scorched or toasted there, so that part is raw dough, part ashes. To such a people potatoes must, indeed, be an exceeding and obvious blessing.

#### **6. Beef forbidden, W.G. Osborne<sup>51</sup>**

Beef is as much a forbidden food in the Punjab as pork is in Hindostan to the natives; and to kill a cow across the Sutlege would subject the perpetrator of the deed to almost certain death.

#### **7. Cow dung as fuel, Honoria Lawrence<sup>52</sup>**

The passage: Ezekiel IV 9-17, wherein the prophet is commanded to use dung as fuel for preparing his food, appears to us very revolting, but in the East, it bears a very different aspect. Here, dung is the chief article of fuel. Women and children may be seen carrying on their heads baskets of it that they collected, and then preparing it for use by kneading it up. Sometimes it is laid in cakes against the wall to dry. These cakes are afterwards built into conical stacks. Sometimes it is laid along the ground in parallel ridges a few inches apart, and when dried, another set of ridges are laid across these, so that the stack when finished, presents alternate hollow and open squares. In places where wood is scarce, one may account for any substitute being employed as fuel, [but] cow dung is just as much used in the forest as in the bare plain. Manuring the land is a practice hardly known, except with respect to small patches of ground for opium, tobacco, or esculents...

### **D. DWELLINGS**

#### **1. In Upper Assam, William Griffith<sup>53</sup>**

[Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> 1836] – We arrived at Kujoo, a rather large village of Singfos, and within half a day's journey of which the tea is found in its native state. This is the first Singfo village I have as yet seen, and is situated on the skirts of a plain of small extent, and covered to all appearance by extensive grass jungles, among which trees are interspersed. The houses are not numerous, but they are of large size, and are raised in the Burman fashion on piles from the ground. Within one, many families are accommodated.

#### **2. Every man carries his bed, Honoria Lawrence<sup>54</sup>**

Indeed almost every man who moves about at all here takes up his bed which is generally merely a blanket, or two folds of cloth quilted together with cotton. The other bed in common use is a *charpoy*, or frame of light wood, laced across with twine, and raised on four legs, about eight inches high. This is very light, and I have repeatedly seen a man walking along with



his *charpoy* on his head. One day lately, a man who had [been] hurt in quarrel was brought into our camp on one of these beds, "borne of four," just as I suppose the sick man was carried to Jesus. The one I speak of was borne on the men's heads, but a *charpoy* is frequently made into a couch for transporting the sick by swinging it with cords from bamboo which four men bear on the shoulders. An easier conveyance could not be devised, for it has no jolt, and I have for my own use, a sea-cot so swung, which I usually prefer to palanquin for a long march...

### **3. Boat houses in Kashmir, Honoria Lawrence, the first white woman to visit Kashmir<sup>55</sup>**

A great part of the population live entirely upon the water. Long, large, unwieldy boats thatched over, not an uncomfortable dwelling in a climate like this. An earthen fireplace for cooking, a very rude spinning wheel, a hutch for fowls, a fishing net and a few earthen cooking pots seem the sole furniture. I don't know what becomes of the men belonging to these boats, for one seldom sees in them any but women and children.

The women here row stoutly and the children are quite amphibious. It is strange to see the swarms of little things, dark and shining like tadpoles in the shallow water near the banks.

### **4. Houses in the Deccan, Bishop Heber<sup>56</sup>**

The cottages both in the Concan and in the Deckan are small and mean, with steep thatched roofs, and very low side-walls of loose stones, and there is a general appearance of poverty both in the dress and farming implements of the people. Their cattle, however, are of a larger and better breed than those of Bengal.

### **5. A *pankha*, Fanny Parkes<sup>57</sup>**

The first sight of a *pankha* is a novelty to a griffin [a new comer]. It is a monstrous fan, a wooden frame covered with cloth, some ten, twenty, thirty, or more feet long, suspended from the ceiling of a room, and moved to and fro by a man outside by means of a rope and pulleys, and a hole in the wall through which the rope passes; the invention is a native one; they are the greatest luxuries, and are also handsome, some being painted and gilt, the ropes covered with silk, and so shaped or scooped as to admit their vibratory motion without touching the chandeliers, suspended in the same line with the *pankha*, and when at rest, occupying the space scooped out. In the up-country, the *pankha* is always pulled during the night over the *charpai* or bed.



## E. HOSPITALITY

### 1. **Generous to strangers, Edward Ives<sup>58</sup>**

In truth, the hospitality and generosity shewn to strangers in general in this country, are beyond expression; nor is it possible to point out a part of the world where the spirit of charity is more nobly exerted than in our East India Company's settlements: numerous instances might be mentioned, where princely subscriptions have in a few hours been raised, and applied to the effectual relief of many unfortunate families.

### 2. **Serais for travellers, George Forster<sup>59</sup>**

India, you know, hath ever been famed for affording convenient places of accommodation to the traveller, who, at the distance of eight or ten miles, seldom fails meeting with a public lodging, or a reservoir of water, where he may perform his ablutions, and quench his thirst. As the greater part of the inhabitants of India, from a simplicity of life, and the clement state of their climate, have but few superfluous wants, a slight defence against the sun and rain, a small portion of clothing, with plain food, constitute a large share of their real ones. In Upper India, the economy of Karawan Serah, or, as it is usually called, the Serauce, is conducted by better regulations, and its conveniences more sensibly felt, than in the southern parts of India. An inclosed area, the interior sides of which contain small apartments, fronting inwards with a principal gateway, is appropriated, in every village of note, to the use of travellers. The stationary tenants of the Serauce, many of them women, and some of them very pretty, approach the traveller on his entrance, and in alluring language describe to him the various excellencies of their several lodgings. When the choice is made (which is often perplexing, so many are the inducements thrown out on all sides of him) a bed is laid out for his repose – a smoking pipe is brought, and the utensils cleaned, for preparing his repast. The necessary sum is delivered into the hands generally of a girl, who procures the materials and dresses his meal in a most expeditious manner. For two domestics and myself, the horse and his keeper, the whole of my daily expenditure amounted to a sum, which as you will not credit, I will not venture to note; and on days when I was inclined to feast, the addition of two or three pence procured a sumptuous fare, with the accompaniment of a sauce, which an alderman over his callipash might sigh for.

### 3. **Serais, Bishop Heber<sup>60</sup>**

Futtehpoor is surrounded, like most of these towns, with tombs, in the midst of which our tents were pitched. Near us was a large but ruinous serai, which had, however, more of its interior detail perfect than most which I have



seen in India. It corresponded in many respects with those of Turkey, and Crim Tartary, – a large court with two gateways opposite to each other, surmounted by towers not unlike those of a college, with a cloister or verandah all round raised about a foot from the ground, with a pukka floor, and having little fire-places contrived against the wall, just large enough to hold the earthen pitchers in which all the cookery is carried on, and behind this, a range of small and dark apartments a step lower than the verandah. No payment is required for lodging here, except a few cowries to the sweeper, while for a very few pice, grass and water will be furnished to a traveller's beasts, and wood and earthen pots to himself; for provisions the neighbouring bazaar is ready. These serais are generally noble monuments of individual bounty, and some were in ancient times liberally endowed, and furnished supplies of gram, milk, and grass gratis to the traveller, as well as shelter. Their foundations are most of them alienated, but even so far as shelter only is concerned, it is a very great blessing in this country, where the general poverty of the natives, and the prejudices of caste, forbid a stranger hoping for admission into any private dwelling. Even now, though ruinous, they are kept tolerably clean, and their benefit is so great to all persons, whether Europeans or natives, who are not rich enough to possess tents, and occasionally to some even of those who are, that I rejoice to learn that their restoration is one of the objects proposed by Government in the application of the internal tolls to works of public improvement.

## **F. ECONOMIC CONDITION OF PEOPLE**

### **1. Famines**

#### **(a) Famine of A.D. 1770, poor state of the countryside, William Hodges<sup>61</sup>**

In the great famine which raged through Indostan in the year 1770, and the ravages of which were particularly felt in every part of Bengal, the Jungleterry is said to have suffered greatly. I have understood that it was before this time highly cultivated, and filled with industrious husbandmen and manufacturers, and the population was estimated at more than eighteen thousand people. It is, however, at present reduced to a few hundreds, great numbers having been cut off by famine, and others having migrated in search of food....

The country I had passed through from Allahabad to Lucknow, and thence to Fyzabad, has the same general character, and there are very few elevations to be seen in it that are considerable. It is in a moderate state of cultivation, in some parts better than others; but where it is neglected, it is evidently more from the want of property in the people, than the natural fertility of the country,



which, on the contrary, I believe to be capable of producing the finest crops. The villages, of which there are many, some are comfortable in their appearance, and others apparently distressed. After leaving the flourishing district of Benaras, I could not help viewing with a melancholy concern the miserable appearance of all the territories which were under the absolute direction of Mussulman tyrants...

The country from Lucknow to Etaya is in a moderate state of cultivation, but the villages are poor...

The country from Etaya to this place [Jeswotnagur] is very little cultivated; the villages are not populous, and the few inhabitants appear very wretched.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we halted at O'Krairie, six coss further, almost at the termination of the Nabob of Oud's country.

Through the whole of the last day's journey I observed scarcely a spot in cultivation; the villages, of which there are several, were in ruins, and the whole presented almost on uninterrupted scene of desolation. On the last day's march we met a few unfortunate people passing down into the provinces, in order actually to avoid being starved, begging their way....

Between Shekoabad and Fyrozabad are a few spots of cultivated ground. This village takes its name from the Purgunnah, which is a small district within a larger: it was at this time in the hands of a Gosine, or Hindoo Religious; and as the spirit of the Hindoo government is favourable to agriculture in the highest degree, this spot appeared a perfect garden. It must, indeed, be observed, that although the Hindoo governors or proprietors, from the principle of avarice, may sometimes distress, they do not destroy the endeavours of the poor, as the Mussulmans....

#### **(b) Famine and starvation deaths, 19 December 1835, Fanny Eden<sup>62</sup>**

##### **Maharajpore**

We now pass through every day, the finest country for dust that it is possible to imagine and there is nothing else to be seen, not a blade of grass – the cattle are to be fed by Oude grass, just as we are to be fed by Oude cooks. We shall not pass through the distressed districts but the famine on one side of the country round Cawnpore, where we shall be the day after tomorrow, is very frightful now. A man was here the other day who had just travelled through that part and said the people were dying in hundreds by the roadside. He had sometimes seen twenty and thirty bodies lying close together....

My dearest, I am sick at heart with all this starvation we see about us. Now we are only upon the outskirts of the country where famine is raging but we are among those who have only wandered from it to die, and even here



some of the villages are depopulated, the crops are dying fast for want of rain. As yet there are funds at all the civil stations for giving food to all who want it but many die upon the road and everyday we see those who do not seem to have an hour's life left in them. Every evening all who come are fed with rice but even these were more than three hundred and it was found difficult to prevent them tearing the rice from each other. Some scarcely look human, particularly the children. It made me shudder yesterday to see one little wretch who was lying alone in the middle of the camp tear bread off the loaf with his teeth which it had hardly strength enough to swallow. The mothers offer to sell their skeletons of babies for a rupee. The fathers seem to get what food they can for themselves and to leave women and children for starve – but many men too quietly lie down and die. If rain would come during the next fortnight, the crops for the next year might be saved and then the rich natives who have grain in their granaries might sell it, but it is generally during the Xmas week that the rain comes and there is no appearance of it. Already I feel as if we were only giving a few more days of misery to those we feed, for they must die of hunger at last. Three or four days will take away from the sight of all this suffering but I am sure I will never forget it...

#### **January 7<sup>th</sup> 1836 Kanonze.**

I have not really had the heart to write the last three days – we have been surrounded by people dying of starvation. Some hundred came for food yesterday, a thousand were fed today, but many of them are still lying round the camp, children who have not many hours of life left in them – some of the grown-up people too are nothing but skin and bone, their faces like skulls. Captain Cunningham found many more today, one woman dead and a man and woman dying, many sitting round but taking no notice. There is plenty of grain too in the granaries but the rich natives, from fear of a greater scarcity next year, will not sell it. The distribution of food is grown very difficult, they will not wait for their turns but rush forwards to tear it from each other and the children are nearly crushed. Almost all our native servants have adopted either orphans or children they have bought for a rupee or two – a very common thing in these times of distress – and they generally keep them for the rest of their lives. We are now within three days of Futteghar and there work is provided for all who can work and funds to support the women and children who cannot...

#### **January 9<sup>th</sup>**

Our poor people are improving a little and have been much less vociferous today. I saw a gentleman today who has come from that part of the country from which these have wandered, and he says the sights there are horrible – hundreds dead and he saw many as he passed stripping bark off the trees and



cooking it. Our French servant went out to look for cantaloupes by the side of the river, and found above a hundred lying together and some skeletons upright in the water and passed through a village where but two inhabitants were left. My dearest, I am longing to be away from all these horrors, where I feel that we can do but little good – all that is consumed by man and beast comes to us from Oude. The country is bare even of grass – at the best it is thinly inhabited. But it is no affectation to say that when we sit down to dinner with the band playing and all the pomp and circumstances of life about us, which is just as much kept up in a tent as anywhere else, my very soul sickens at the cries of the starving children outside which never seem to cease.

## **2. Poorer natives in Calcutta, James Mitchell<sup>63</sup>**

The poorer Natives live in mud houses thatched with straw; the whole Furniture consisting of a mat on which they sleep wrap'd in their Turban unfolded (which with the rag that comes thro' the Thighs fastened to a string round their middle is all their cloaths) and some earthen pots to boil their rice & currie and a Goblet to hold Water (their only beverage) is the whole Furniture; some may have a brass Bowl from which they pour the Water into their mouth, never put it to the Lip; and the Rice put on a mud frame, fitted in a few minutes to the earthen pot that is to boil it, with a small hole in one side to introduce a few dry twigs which they soon kindle, and with the most frugal attention make the whole heat act on the bottom of the pot, and when sufficiently boiled pour off the water and put the rice on a large broad leaf heaped, and having uttered a short Prayer and set apart a small portion as an offering, and washed their mouth and hands; with the Thumb and two fore fingers of their right hand (their left being appropriate to unclean purposes) they mix the rice with a very small quantity of prepared Currie and throw as much as will ly on these fingers into their mouth without touching their Lips, and a large quantity they devour, having only two meals a day.

## **3. Artisans exploited, Robert Orme<sup>64</sup>**

The mechanic or artificer will work only to the measure of his necessities. He dreads to be distinguished. If he becomes too noted for having acquired a little more money than others of his craft, that will be taken from him. If conspicuous for the excellence of his skill, he is seized upon by some person in authority, and obliged to work for him night and day, on much harder terms than his usual labour acquired when at liberty.

Hence all emulation is destroyed; and all the luxury of an Asiatick empire has not been able to counteract by its propensity to magnificence and splendour, the dispiriting effects of that fear which reigns throughout, and without which a despotick power would reign no more.



#### 4. Extreme poverty of sepoys, Albert Hervey who was in India from 1833 to 1842<sup>65</sup>

Turn we now to a sepoy on the line of march. We will suppose him in the ranks. We have seen his means of subsistence; we know how he feeds, how he is clothed, and how he can undergo his duties in garrison. Now let the reader patiently follow me a little longer, and I will show him the miseries, the privations, and the fatigues to which he is exposed while marching. Before starting, a sepoy generally receives an advance of pay; perhaps he has it in full, or only half, according to the pleasure of the commanding officer, or the distance he has to go. With this advance of pay he has to clear himself from the station (for probably he has incurred debts), besides paying an advance equal to one half, or altogether, as the case may be, for the means of conveying his goods and chattels, as well as his numerous family, some of whom, particularly the young and aged, are unable to walk.

Exclusively of all this, he has to provide the means of sustenance for himself and dependants, and that with a total of perhaps two rupees in his pocket, for a journey of about two or three or four hundred miles! How can he do this? Impossible! He must starve and so must his family; at all events, they must from sheer necessity feed themselves upon the most economical plans that they can possibly devise.

Curry and rice are luxuries they dare not think of. Plain boiled rice is not so expensive, and of that they sometimes do manage to have a treat, about two mouthfuls each. Bread or biscuits, or *chuppatees* (cakes made of rice flour), are quite out of the question. Butter-milk with a green chili after it, and now and then a bit of salt fish by way of a relish, is generally their sole food; and parched peas, or raw *chenna* (or grain), forms a kind of variety which they chew, resembling the cud of bitter poverty in every sense of the word.

Upon this sort of diet have they to support nature, and be fit for the duties to which they are called in the camp and on the route. The sepoy has to take his tour of guard once every three days (sometimes oftener), exposed at nights to the damp chilly dew, and perhaps be drenched with rain, being obliged to remain so for hours together during the whole night, and march the next morning without change of clothes, and without any food or other description of creature comfort, save a pot full of that abominable trash, buttermilk.

On arriving at the next stage, he has no comfortable breakfast, no hot coffee, no dram, nothing except some cold rice and water of the preceding day to satisfy his hunger. All this time he has to carry his pack, firelock, and accoutrements; his chaco, his pouch full of ball cartridges; the body emaciated and rendered feeble from want of proper sustenance; how is it possible for the wretched man to go through all this without breaking down?



**5. The poverty of the Hindus, Abbe Dubois<sup>66</sup>**

India has always been considered a most wealthy and opulent country, more favoured by nature than any other in the world, a land literally flowing with milk and honey, where the soil yields all that is necessary for the existence of its happy people almost without cultivation. The great wealth accumulated by a few of its native princes, the large fortunes so rapidly acquired by many Europeans, its valuable diamond mines, the quality and quantity of its pearls, the abundance of its spices and scented woods, the fertility of its soil, and the, at one time, unrivalled superiority of its various manufactures: all these have caused admiration and wonder from time immemorial. One would naturally suppose that a nation which could supply so many luxuries would surpass all others in wealth.

This estimation of the wealth of India has been commonly accepted in Europe up to the present day; and those who, after visiting the country and obtaining exact and authentic information about the real condition of its inhabitants, have dared to affirm that India is the poorest and most wretched of all the civilised countries of the world, have simply not been believed....all these beautiful fabrics are manufactured in wretched thatched huts built of mud, twenty to thirty feet long by seven or eight feet broad. In such a work-room the weaver stretches his frame, squats on the ground, and quietly plies his shuttle, surrounded by his family, his cow, and his fowls. The instruments he makes use of are extremely primitive, and his whole stock in trade could easily be carried about by one man. Such is, in very truth, an exact picture of an Indian factory. As to the manufacturer himself, his poverty corresponds to the simplicity of his work-shop...

I should class the inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula in the following manner. The first and lowest class may be said to be composed of all those whose property is below the value of 5 pounds sterling. This class appears to me to comprise nine-twentieths, or perhaps even a half, of the entire population...

I place in the second class all those whose property ranges from 5 to 25 pounds sterling. This class, I should say, includes about six-twentieths of the entire population...

Thirdly, I may reckon together those Hindus whose property varies in value from 25 to 50 pounds sterling. They comprise about one-tenth of the population...

The fourth class comprises those whose property varies in value from 50 to 100 pounds sterling, and I should say it forms three-fortieths of the population...

In the fifth class I should include all those whose property varies in value from 100 to 200 pounds sterling. It comprises about one-thirtieth of the whole population...



The sixth class may be said to comprise individuals whose tangible property varies in value from 200 to 500 pounds sterling, and it represents, I should say, about one-fiftieth of the population...

The seventh class may be said to be composed of those whose property varies in value from 500 to 1,000 pounds sterling. I should say only one-hundredth part of the population belongs to this class...

The eighth class includes those whose properties range in value from 1,000 to 2,000 pounds sterling, and it comprises one two-hundredths of the population...

## G. DOMESTIC SERVANTS

### 1. The army of servants Europeans required in India, Mrs. Nathaniel Kindersley<sup>67</sup>

The division of the Indians into *casts* is the cause of great inconveniences and expense to the English, as it obliges them to hire three times the number of servants which would otherwise be necessary; for none of them, even on the greatest emergency, will perform the most trifling office which does not belong to their particular *cast*.

The first servant is called a *Banian*; he is at the head of all the business, but if it considerable, he has two or three *Banians* or *Sarcars*, under him.

The next is a *Butler Connah Sarcar*; his office is to take an account of all the money expended for provisions, to pay the butchers, bakers, &c. and answers to a clerk of the kitchen; the next is a *Consummah*, who is the house keeper, he has under him a *compradore*, who goes to market: the *compradore* buys all small articles for the table, and gives his account to the *butler connah sarcar*: the next is a butler, who is an assistant to the *consummah*.

The other servants, who wait at table, or take care of a gentleman's cloaths, &c. are called *kissmagars*. The *Peadars* usually called *Peons* run before your *palenqueen* and carry messages. The *bearers* are the chairmen, it is necessary for every person in a family to have six or eight of them, the lower *casts* of *bearers* take their turn to carry the *mussall* [torch] before the *palenqueen*; but the superior *casts* who are cleaner and more creditable will not condescend to touch it, therefore to every set of bearers it is necessary to have at least two boys of a low cast called *Mussall Chies*.

The *bearers* business, besides carrying the *palenqueen*, is to bring water to wash after dinner, &c. one brings an ewer with water, and pours it over your hands, another gives a towel, but it must be a *Mussall Chie*, or a slave, who holds the *chillumchee*, for the *bearer* would be disgraced by touching any thing which contains the water after one has washed with it.



A cook in a family will have at least one assistant, if not more, and every horse you keep must have a *scice*, and a grass cutter.

The *hooker badar* will do nothing but dress a hooker and attend his master while he smokes it.

These servants all are men; and often the only woman in a family is a *Matrannee*, a *Hallicore*, who sweeps the rooms, and does all the dirty offices which the others will not condescend to.

The servants who attend in a lady's apartment are generally slave girls, or Portuguese women; and the nurses for children are Portuguese.

The gardeners are called *Mollies*; like all the other people, many hands do but little work; the men who bring water for the gardens, and other purposes, are called *Busties*; they carry the water in large leathern bags slung over their backs, at one corner of which there is a sort of spout, which they bring under the right arm; by that means they water the gardens, and throw it whenever else it is necessary.

The taylor's who make your linen are monthly servants; the slowness of these men can be equalled by nothing but their stupidity. All the linen is washed by men who are paid by the month.

The *Derwan's* business is to stand at the outward door, to announce visitors; but they are not generally kept, as a *Peon*, or *Chubdar*, will do that office.

*Chubdar* are men who carry a long silver stick, and do nothing but go before *palenqueen*, carry messages, or announce visitors. Keeping *Chubdars* is a piece of state allowed by the black people only to officers of dignity in the state; and by the English is confined to the council and filed officers.

The *Banian's* wage is the most considerable, and depends on the situation of his master. The wages of the other servants differ according to their quality: a *Consummah*, Cook, &c. have thirty, twenty, or ten rupees a month; the others less; and some of the lowest order not more than three or four rupees.

None of the servants ever eat, drink, or sleep in their master's house; nor will either Hindoos or Mahomedans eat of any thing which goes from their master's table.

It is impossible to avoid inconvenience of a multitude of servants; for if you lessen the number but one, they have a thousand tricks to distress you; and from your head *Banian* to the lowest *Mussall Chie* in your family, all are combined to oblige you to keep the number which they deem proportioned to your rank.

As their master rises in life, they insist upon more Cooks, more *Peons*, more *Kissmagars*, more *Bearers*, &c. The consequence of a refusal is that those he wants most, particularly *Bearers*, will run away; and the *Banian*, who is in the secret, makes so many difficulties in getting others, and has so many



well-feigned excuses, and so many artful tricks to make his master feel the want of them, that although people are sensible of the fraud, they are obliged to comply with what their servants call *custom*, to save themselves the numberless vexations they would otherwise occasion. Most of the servants besides insist upon raising their wages in proportion to their master's rank. This they likewise tell him is *all time custom*, a favourite expression with the *Banians*; and, in their opinion, a sufficient reason for any thing.

□



## Chapter 3

# Community and Regional Characteristics

- A. The Jats
- B. The Marathas
- C. The Sikhs
- D. The Kashmiris
- E. People of Kangra
- F. People of Kumaon
- G. The Gurkhas
- H. The Churra people
- I. The Bhooteahs
- J. The Lepchas
- K. The Bengalis
- L. People of the Doab
- M. The Bheels
- N. The Kolis
- O. The Patels of Gujarat
- P. The Sindhis
- Q. The Siaposh kafirs

## **A. THE JATS**

### **1. A robust people, Father Wendel<sup>1</sup>**

...under the name of Jats, one must moreover comprehend the Gauruvas, Gujars, Bargujars and Ahirs, who are intermixed with them and, under these different names, constitute specifically but one people, similar in most respects and who marry amongst another. Their robust physiques, their rural appearance and uncouth manner, and their way to speak and dress and comport themselves



still today (despite the riches and sovereign power they have acquired and notwithstanding their long abode in the center of the country reputedly the most civilised in Hindustan with the most refined cities of the entire monarchy around them), make sufficiently known that they have not been engaged with other occupations than those of the countryside and that they have not borne arms other than the plough and axe; or, after their own fashion, sickle and staff. I know that the Bargujars retain, or claim to retain, yet several marks of nobler caste. Nonetheless, the superiority which the Jats, in this century, have had over the others has brought many things their way which, at another time, they could never have awaited.

## **2. Beliefs and habits same as of other Gentiles, Father Wendel<sup>2</sup>**

Because their belief is no different from that of other gentiles in this country, I have nothing in particular to say regarding that. Their food is about the same as that of the Rajputs, apart from the fact that the majority of Jats abstain from meat. In their manner of dress, there are some slight differences: in the summer, they are ordinarily quite naked, having only a turban on the head, a light belt around the waist and nothing else on the body; in winter, they wear a kind of simple skirt, but in a fashion particular to themselves, that, together with a pair of pendant earrings of gold in the shape of a bunch of grapes, makes recognizable and distinguishes a Jat among others. Their women also wear nose-rings of gold, much larger and heavier and made in a different way than those of most women in India. They most frequently have their hair tied on the top of their heads in the form of a bun, while the head itself is covered with a red cloth attached at the belt, as almost all women of the country. I have observed no other distinction. Men and women are for the most part robust and of a rather slight height. Their language is that of Hindustan, but coarse and with those inflections which are indicative of rusticity, as in their manner in general. Still no majesty whatsoever, nor even splendour at court, after attaining to such an exalted power; no furnishing or possessions at all in the houses of the well-to-do individuals. Wealthy, but sordid; powerful, but peasants. In a word, they remain Jats in everything. At times of war each peasant is also soldier; they go to their fortresses where, during the time they are needed, their pay is their food which consists of only one *ser* of wheat, a few grains in addition to a bit of butter, and nothing more. When the country is at peace, each returns to his home to tend to the ploughing of the land where one lives. It is the same for the cavalrymen. Only foreign troops are paid as everywhere else. It is thus that at the occasion of war there is such a strong and numerous garrison (let us say, rather, a great number of people) in the main strongholds, as has been noted elsewhere.



For the rest, since they have come to power, they govern much as do the other powers and *rajas* of the country. It should only be observed, that one sees that, with their wealth, they have become lethargic and cowardly; an ordinary failing which great fortunes bring in their wake. These are no longer the Jats, so intrepid and proud, as they were in their beginnings. They are themselves surprised at this and have noticed the great difference, without recollecting the little they formerly had to lose, when all their attention was directed towards the seizing of the wealth of others; and, it is nothing new in the world that warrior peoples, believed invincible, began to decline after they had become acquainted with abundance and had reached a state in which it would seem they have nothing to desire or fear.

### **3. The Jats at Bharatpur, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>3</sup>**

...I felt a high degree of interest as I approached the town, which is seen at a great distance. As I crossed the plain, I beheld on every side luxuriant fields of wheat and barley in full ear; and I was very much struck with the appearance of the tall, vigorous Juts, who were pursuing their agricultural occupations with their sabres at their sides, and their spears stuck in the ground, apparently for a land-mark. Their wives, too, were working diligently, close by their husbands. They are more robust than the Hindoo women, and were dressed in red garments, very much like shawls.

## **B. THE MARATHAS**

### **1. Appearance of Marathas, Godfrey Charles Mundy<sup>4</sup>**

The personal appearance of the Mahrattas is mean and unprepossessing. They have neither the fair stature and noble bearing of the Mussulman, nor the delicacy of feature and elegance of figure of the southern Hindoo; and they appear to greater disadvantage in our eyes, that we have just left the territories of two of the finest races of people in India, the Seikhs and the Rohillas. Their acknowledged character as brave and skilful soldiers, however, amply makes amends for their personal deficiencies.

The chief weapon of the Mahratta is the spear, which is formed of the male bamboo, and from 12 to 18 feet long. He is also skilful in the use of the matchlock. The troops are for the most part mounted on mares which, although, like the cossack's horse, lanky and ill-fed, are, like him, capable of going through a great deal of work.

### **2. A courageous people, Anquetil-Duperron<sup>5</sup>**

The land of the Marathas is generally open. The people are gay, strong



and healthy; they depend only on their courage and their arms. Cavalry is their mainstay; hospitality their principal virtue. This land seemed to me the land of Nature. As I spoke to them I almost believed I was conversing with people of the first age. A large camp of huts Ponin [Pune], this present capital of the Maraths, is quite a flourishing town.

### **3. Numbers increase with tribes enlisting themselves, Alexander Dow<sup>6</sup>**

The Mahrattors are the most considerable Hindoo power in Hindostan. The principal seat of their government is Sattarah, and sometimes Puna, on the coast towards Bombay. Though the genuine Mahrattors all over India do not exceed 60000 men, yet from their superior bravery and success in depredation, thousands of all tribes enlist themselves under their banners. These, instead of pay, receive a certain proportion of the plunder. By this means an army of Mahrattors increases like a river, the farther it advances: so that it is no uncommon thing for a force of ten or twelve thousand genuine Mahrattors to grow into 100,000, before they arrive in the place which they destine to plunder.

### **4. Retain mildness in home government, Alexander Dow<sup>7</sup>**

The nations of the Mahrattors, though chiefly composed of Rajputs, or that tribe of Indian whose chief business is war, retain the mildness of their countrymen in their domestic government. When their armies carry destruction and death into the territories of Mahomedans, all is quiet, happy, and regular at home. No robbery is to be dreaded, no imposition or obstruction from the officers of government, no protection necessary but the shade. To be a stranger is a sufficient security. Provisions are furnished by hospitality; and when a peasant is asked for water, he runs with great alacrity, and fetches milk. This is no ideal picture of happiness. The Author of the Disseration [Dow], who travelled lately into the country of the Mahrattors, avers, from experience, the truth of his observation. But the Mahrattors, who have been represented as barbarians, are a great and rising people, subject to a regular government, the principles of which are founded on virtue.

### **5. The Marathas will restore ancient Hindu government, de Saint-Lubin from Pune in 1777<sup>8</sup>**

They make so much progress every day that one may easily predict that before the end of the present century they will have succeeded in restoring the wisdom of ancient Hindu government wherever Mohammedan invasion has let loose the scourge of despotism and tyranny.



**6. Aspired to national sovereignty, Quintin Craufurd<sup>9</sup>**

The measure pursued by the Mahrattas for some years, left little room to doubt that they aspired at the sovereignty of all Hindostan, or at least at the expulsion of the Mahomedan princes: and, in the course of their prosperity, some of their chiefs were so imprudent as to avow such intention. But the loss of the battle of Paniput, their frequent defeats by the English, and their late internal divisions, have affected their strength as a nation, sullied their renown as warriors, and moderated their view of conquest...

If we only view the Mahrattas as engaged in war, they must necessarily appear as the most cruel of barbarians; but if we enter their country as travellers, and consider them in a state of peaceful society, we find them strictly adhering to the principles of the religion of Brihma; in harmony among themselves, and ready to receive and assist the stranger.

**7. 'A peaceable and industrious race,' Bishop Heber<sup>10</sup>**

The plain country, both of the Concan and the more elevated level of the Deckan, is inhabited by Maharattas, a peaceable and industrious race, among whom there should seem to be fewer remarkable crimes against society than, with a similar population, is found in most parts of India...

The great body of the Maharatta people are a very peaceable and simple peasantry, of frugal habits, and gentle dispositions; there seems to be no district in India, of equal extent and population, where so few crimes are committed, and of the robberies and murders which really occur, the greatest part by far are the work of the Bheels, who on these mountains, as well as in Central India, maintain a precarious and sanguinary independence, and are found less accessible to such means of conciliation as have yet been tried with them, than any of their more northern kindred.

## **C. THE SIKHS**

**1. Sikhs accustomed to arduous life, Antoine Louis Henri Polier, a Frenchman [1741-1795] who arrived in India in 1757, married two Indian women and stayed in the country for thirty-two years. The following is from a paper he read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787<sup>11</sup>**

The Siques are in general strong and well made, accustomed from their Infancy to the most labourious Life and hardest fare, they make marches and undergo fatigues that will appear really astonishing. In their Excursions they carry no tents or baggage with them, except perhaps a small tent for the principal Chief, the rest Shelter themselves under a Blanket, which serves them



also in the cold Weather, to wrap themselves in, and which in a March covers their Saddles. They have mostly two horses a piece, and some three; their horses are middle sized, but exceeding good, strong and high spirited, and mild tempered; The Provinces of Lahore and Multan, noted for producing the best Horses in Indostan, supply them amply, and indeed they take the greatest Care to encrease their numbers by all means in their power, and tho' they make merry in the Demise of one of their Brethren, they condole and lament the Death of a Horse, thus shewing their Value for an animal so necessary to them in their Excursions.

As for the food of the Siques it is the coarsest, and such as the poorest People in Hindostan use from necessity. Bread baked in Ashes, soaked afterwards in a Mash made of different kinds of pulse, is their best Dish, and such as they seldom indulge themselves with, except when at full Leisure, otherwise Vetches or Grains hastily parched are all they care for. They abhor smoaking of Tobacco, for what Reason I cannot find, but intoxicate themselves freely either with Spirits or Bang. A cup of the last they seldom fail taking at night after a fatigue. Their Dress is extremely scanty, a pair of blue Drawers, a kind of chequered Plaid worn, partly round the middle and partly over the shoulder with a mean blue Turban forms all their Equipage. Their Chiefs are distinguished by having some heavy gold Bracelets on their Wrists and sometimes a Chain of the same Metal round their Turbans and by being mounted on better Horses, otherwise no distinction appears amongst them.

The Sect of the Siques has a strong taint of the Gentoo Religion, they venerate the Cow, and abstain piously from killing or feeding on it, and they also pay some Respect to the Devtas or Idols. But their great object of worship is with them their own saints, or those whom they have honoured with the name of Gorou. Those they invoke continually and they seem to look on them as everything. Wah Gorou repeated several times is their only Simbol, from which the Musulmen have (not without Reason) taxed them with being downright Atheists. Their mode of initiating their Converts, is by making them drink out of a Pan in which the feet of those present have been washed meaning by that, I presume, to abolish all those Distinctions of Casts which so much encumber the Gentoos; they also steep in it, particularly for a Musulman the tusks or Bones of a Boar and add some of the Blood of that Animal to it. This with repeating the Simbol to Wah Gorou wearing an Iron Bracelet on one Arm, and letting the Hair of the head and beard grown forms the whole Mystery of their Religion, if such a filthy beastly Ceremony, can be dignified with that name. They have also stated Pilgrimages both to the Ganges and their famous Tank at Ambarsar where at fixed times they wash and perform some trifling Ceremonies invoking at the same time their Gorou.



**2. High veneration for truth; from the manuscript notes of an officer of the Bengal army [probably Captain Matthews, Deputy Commissary of Ordnance at Fatehgarh who travelled through Punjab in 1808 in an unofficial capacity [*Asiatic Annual Register*, vol. X1, for the Year 1809]<sup>12</sup>**

The inhabitants throughout this country, and as far as the Sutledge, bear a high character for hospitality and kindness to strangers. Their benevolence is not narrowed by bigotry or prejudice, and disclaims the distinctions of religion or complexion. They are particularly attentive to travellers of all casts or countries. The chief of every town makes a point of subsisting all poor and needy travellers, from his own funds, a part of which are set aside for that purpose, and when that fall short, from an increased number of indigent claimants, their wants are supplied by a subscription made from the principal inhabitants of the place. It is very pleasing to travel through the town and villages of this country. The inhabitants receive the stranger with an air of welcome that prepossesses him in their favour. They are, at the same time, courteous and respectful, contrary to what the traveller experiences in Mussulman towns, where he is looked upon with contempt, and regarded as an unwelcome intruder. The character of the Sikhs had been represented to me in a very favourable light, and my own observations confirmed all that I had heard in their favour. They are just and amiable in their social intercourse, and affectionate in their domestic relations. One quality particularly raises the character of the Sikhs above all other Asiatics, and that is, their higher veneration for truth. Both as a people and as individuals, they may be considered as much less addicted to the low artifices of evasion, lying or dissimulation, than any other race of Asiatics. Implicit dependence may be placed upon their promise, in all matters either of public or private concern, and if a Sikh declares himself your friend, he will not disappoint your confidence, if, on the other hand, he bears enmity to any one, he declares it without reserve. – Upon the whole, they are a plain, manly, hospitable, and industrious people, and by far the best race I have ever met in India. They have all the essential qualities of a good soldier: – in their persons they are hardy and athletic; of active habits, patient, faithful, and brave. They are strongly attached to their chiefs, and will never desert them, while they are well treated.

**3. Pleasing appearance, Mountstuart Elphinstone who undertook a mission to Kabul in 1808<sup>13</sup>**

4<sup>th</sup> July 1809 –... The town of Rawil Pindie is large and populous. It is a pretty place, is composed of terraced houses, and is very like a town west of the Indus. The country round is open, scattered with single hills, and tolerably



cultivated, We halted here for six days to get Runjeet Sing's leave to advance. We now saw a good deal of the Sikhs, whom we found to be disposed to be civil, and by no means displeasing. They were manly in their appearance, and were tall, and thin, though muscular. They wore little clothes, their legs, half their thighs, and generally their arms and bodies, being bare; but they had often large scarfs, thrown loosely over one shoulder. Their turbans were not large, but high, and rather flattened in front. Their beards, and hair on their heads and bodies, are never touched by scissors. They generally carry matchlocks, or bows, the better sort generally bows; and never pay a visit without a fine one in their hand, and an embroidered quiver by their side. They speak Punjaabee, and sometimes attempt Hindoostanee, but I seldom understood them without an interpreter. Persian was quite unknown. They do not know the name of the Dooraunees, though that tribe has often conquered their country. They either call them by the general name of Khorassaunees, or by the erroneous one of Ghiljee.

#### **4. The natives of the Panjab, Charles Masson<sup>14</sup>**

As men, physically speaking, the natives of the Panjab are superior to those of Hindustan Proper. Their limbs are muscular and well proportioned, and they have a stoutness of leg and calf, seldom seen in the Hindustani. Instances of very tall stature may be rare, the general standard being a little above the middle size. The Sikhs are certainly a fine race of men, particularly the better classes. Their females, being seldom permitted to go abroad, I can scarcely speak decidedly concerning them, but the five or six I have by chance met with, would justify the supposition that they are very attractive. They wear extraordinary high conical caps, producing a curious effect, with trowsers. The dress of the men is peculiar, but not inelegant, consisting of the Panjab pagri for the head, a vest, or jacket, fitting close to the body and arms, with large, bulky trowsers, terminating at the knee, the legs from the knee being naked. Chiefs occasionally wear full trowsers, which, however, are recent introductions, and many people remember the time when the Maharaja and his court could scarcely be said to wear trowsers at all. Over the shoulders, a scarf is usually thrown. Generally speaking, these articles of dress are white. The Sikhs, to their honour, are very cleanly in their linen, in which particular they advantageously differ from their Mussulman compatriots. Their scarfs are usually trimmed with a coloured silk border, and sometimes scarlet shawls, or other showy fabrics, are employed. The Sikhs allow the hair of their heads to attain its full growth, and gather it up into a knot at the crown, agreeably to the old Jetic fashion. By pressing it tightly back from the forehead they somewhat elevate the upper part of the face, which imparts a peculiar cast to the countenance.



The Sikhs are almost exclusively a military and agricultural people. They pay much attention to the breeding of horses, and there is scarcely one of them who has not one or more brood mares. Hence, amongst the irregular cavalry – a service to which they are partial – nearly every man's horse is *bona fide* his own property, and even in the regular cavalry a very trifling proportion of the horses belong to the Maharaja. It must be confessed that the Sikhs are barbarous, so far as the want of information and intelligence can make them, yet they have not that savage disposition which makes demons of the rude tribes of the more western countries. They are frank, generous, social, and lively. The cruelties they have practiced against the Mahomedans in the countries they have subdued ought not, I think, to be alleged against them as a proof of their ferocity. Heaven knows, the fury of the bigoted Mahomedan is terrible, and the persecuted Sikhs, in their day, were literally hunted like beasts of the field. At present, flushed by a series of victories, they have a zeal and buoyancy of spirit amounting to enthusiasm; and with the power of taking the most exemplary revenge, they have been still more lenient than the Mahomedans were ever towards them...

### **5. Military strength of Sikhs, George Forster<sup>15</sup>**

The dominions of the Sicques, now widely extended, have been since divided into numerous states, which pursue an independent interest, without a regard to general policy. The grand assembly is now rarely summoned, nor have the Sicques, since the Afghan war, been embarked in any united cause.

Their military force may be said to consist essentially of cavalry; for, though some artillery is maintained, it is awkwardly managed, and its uses ill understood and their infantry, held in low estimation, usually garrison the forts, and are employed in the meaner duties of the service.

A Sicque horseman is armed with a matchlock and sabre of excellent metal, and his horse is strong and well formed. In this matter I speak from a personal knowledge, having in the course of my journey seen two of their parties, each of which amounted to about two hundred horse-men. They were clothed in white vests, and their arms were preserved in good order: the accoutrements, consisting of priming-horns and ammunition pouches, were chiefly covered with European scarlet cloth, and ornamented with gold lace. The predilection of the Sicques for the match-lock musquet and the constant use they make of it, causes a difference in their manner of attack from that of any other Indian cavalry; a party, from forty to fifty, advance in a quick pace to the distance of a carbine shot from the enemy, and then, that the fire may be given with the greater certainty, the horses are drawn up, and their pieces discharged; when, speedily retiring about a hundred paces, they load, and repeat the same mode of annoying the enemy. The horses have been so expertly trained



to the performance of this operation, that, on receiving a stroke of the hand, they stop from a full career. But it is not by this mode of combat that the Sicques have become a formidable people. Their successes and conquests have largely originated from an activity unparalleled by other Indian nations, from their endurance of excessive fatigue, and a keen resentment of injuries. The personal endowments of the Sicques are derived from a temperance of diet, and a forbearance from many of those sensual pleasures which have enervated the Indian Mahometans. A body of their cavalry has been known to make marches of forty or fifty miles, and to continue the exertion for many successive days.

The forces of this nation must be numerous, though I am not possessed of any substantial document for ascertaining the amount. A Sicque will confidently say, that his country can furnish three hundred thousand cavalry, and, to authenticate the assertion, affirms that every person, holding even a small property, is provided with a horse, match-lock, and side-arms. But in qualification of this account, if we admit that the Sicques when united can bring two hundred thousand horse into the field, their force in cavalry is greater than that of any other state in Hindostan....

## 6. Sikh soldiers

### (a) George Thomas (1781-1802), an adventurer at feud with the Sikhs<sup>16</sup>

After performing the requisite duties of their religion by ablution and prayer, the Sikhs comb their beards and hair with peculiar care. Mounting their horses they ride forth towards the enemy with whom they engage in a continual skirmish, advancing and retiring until men and horses are equally tired. They then draw off for a distance from the enemy, until meeting with cultivated ground they permit their horses to graze, whilst they parch a little grain for themselves. After satisfying nature in this frugal manner they renew the skirmishing if the enemy is near. Should he have retreated they follow up and renew these tactics.

Seldom indulging in the comforts of a tent whilst in the enemy's country, the repast of a Sikh cannot be supposed to be either sumptuous or elegant. Seated on the ground with a mat spread before them, a Bramin appointed for the purpose serves out a portion of food to each person, the cakes of flour which they eat during the meal serving them in the room of plates and dishes. Accustomed from their earliest infancy to a life of hardship and difficulty, the Sikh despises the comforts of a tent. In lieu of this, each horseman is furnished with two blankets, one for himself, and one for the horse.

These blankets, which are placed beneath the saddle, and a grain bag



and heel rope, comprise in war the whole baggage of a Sikh. Their cooking utensils are carried on ponies. Considering this mode of life and the extraordinary rapidity of their marches, it cannot be a wonder if they perform marches, which to those accustomed only to European warfare, must seem incredible.

**(b) Cunningham, who was present at all the Punjab Wars<sup>17</sup>**

The guns of the Sikhs were served with rapidity and precision, and the foot soldiers stood between and behind their batteries, firm in their order and active with their musket. The resistance met by the English on this occasion was wholly unexpected, and it was at Ferozeshah for the first time that the Indian and the British soldiers of the English armies met an equal antagonist with their own weapons, even ranks and the fire of artillery.

**(c) General Gough on the prowess of the Khalsa warriors<sup>18</sup>**

Never did a native army having so relatively slight an advantage in numbers fight a battle with the British, in which the issue was so doubtful as at Ferozeshah; and if the victory was decisive, opinion remains divided as to what the result might have been if the Sikh troops had found commanders with sufficient capacity to give their qualities full opportunity.

**7. The Akalis, W.G. Osborne<sup>19</sup>**

They move about constantly, armed to the teeth, and it is not an uncommon thing to see them riding about with a drawn sword in each hand, two more in their belt, a matchlock at their back, and three or four pair of quoits fastened round their turbans.

The quoit is an arm peculiar to this race of people; it is a steel ring, varying from six to nine inches in diameter, and about an inch in breadth, very thin, and the edges ground very sharp...Runjeet Sing has done much towards reducing these people to a state of subjection, (though they are still very troublesome,) by breaking up the large bands of them that were accustomed to congregate in all parts of the Punjab. He has raised some irregular regiments composed entirely of Akalees, which he always employs on any dangerous or desperate service; and as they fight like devils, he continues to make them useful, as well as to expend a great number of them in this way. In 1815, when the Maharajah's army was investing the city of Moulton, the Affghans made so protracted and determined a defence, that Runjeet Sing was induced to offer very advantageous terms, compared to what he was in the habit of doing under similar circumstances; and during the progress of the negotiations, an Akalee, named Sadhoo Sing, with a few companions, advanced to the *fausse braye*, and without orders, in one of their



fits of enthusiasm, attacked the Affghans, who were sleeping or careless on their watch, and killed every man; the Sihk army took advantage of the opportunity, and rushing on, in two hours carried the citadel, Muzuffer Khan and his four sons being all cut down in the gateway, after a gallant defence.

**8. Every day receive proselytes, John Griffith [chief of the Surat factory and briefly Governor of Bombay], in 1794<sup>20</sup>**

The Seiks received Proselytes of almost every Cast, a point in which they differ most materially from the Hindoos... They have forbid absolutely the use of the Hookah, but they are as liberal in the use of Bang, and Ophiam, as their Neighbours. They are not prohibited the use of animal food of any kind, excepting Beef, which they are rigidly scrupulous in abstaining from. They never shave either Head or Beard; They sometimes wear yellow, but the prevailing Colour of their Cloaths is deep blue; They make their Turbans capaciously large, over which they frequently wear a piece of pliable Iron Chain or Net work [an early reference to the Sikh turban known as *dastar bunga* or the turban fortress].

**9. Initiation ceremony; from the manuscript notes of an officer of the Bengal Army [Asiatic Annual Register, vol. X1, for the Year 1809]<sup>21</sup>**

A Sikh wishing to become a Singh, must go through the ceremonies of the institution at this temple [Akal Takht]. It is, however, only the more indigent description of them who apostatize, and generally those who are fed by priests. Although no person can visit the temple without paying, on the first admission, a sum of money to the priests, who divide it equally among themselves, yet they are by no means avaricious; the monies so collected, being expended on their personal wants, given in charity, or laid out in erecting additional buildings; and there is no instance of an Akalee's accumulating money for any other purpose. Choirs of singers assemble at three o'clock every morning, and chaunt their canticles by reliefs, during the day, and till late at night, in the temple; and at two or three other sacred spots, and with great solemnity, thus exciting to religious veneration and awe, and raising the soul to heavenly contemplation. Although the priests are held in the greatest reverence, still you are not to suppose that they are entirely exempt from every vice.... The concourse of fine women who go to bathe at the temple in the morning is prodigious. The individuals composing this groupe of beauty, are far superior in the elegance of their persons, the symmetry of their forms, and the fine traits of countenance, to the generality of the lower Hindoostanees. The Birakees, (or fine singers) as they are here called, are composed of handsome young women, Mooslimas, but are by no means superior either in their singing or dancing to the nautch sets of other parts of Hindoostan; they are, however,



much better dressed, and many of them appear decorated with gold and silver ornaments, to a considerable amount. The Singhs being greatly devoted to pleasure, give every encouragement to the nautch girls. Their songs are chiefly in the Punjab dialect, which is performed as being better understood than the Persian or Hindoostanee, but to an European ear, they are by no means so pleasing, being full of discordant, inharmonious tones.

#### **10. The *Dasam Granth*, Charles Wilkins on a visit to the Takht at Patna in 1781<sup>22</sup>**

They told me further, that some years after this book of Naneek Shah had been promulgated, another made its appearance, now held in almost as much esteem as the former. The name of the author has escaped my memory; but they favoured me with an extract from the book itself in praise of the Deity. The passage had struck my ear on my first entering the hall, when the students were all engaged in reading. From the familiarity of the language to the Hindoovee, and many Shanscrit words, I was able to understand a good deal of it, and I hope, at some future period, to have the honour of laying a translation of it before the Society.

### **MOUNTAIN PEOPLE**

#### **D. THE KASHMIRIS**

##### **1. Well formed, George Forster<sup>23</sup>**

The Kashmirians are stout, well formed, and, as the natives of a country lying in the thirty-fourth degree of latitude, may be termed a fair people; and their women in southern France, or Spain, would be called Brunettes. But, having been prepossessed with an opinion of their charms, I suffered a sensible disappointment; though I saw some of the female dancers most celebrated for beauty, and the attractions of their profession. A coarseness of figure generally prevails among them, with broad features, and they too often have thick legs. Though excelling in the colour of their complexion, they are evidently surpassed by the elegant form and pleasing countenance of the women of some of the western provinces of India.

##### **2. Traits of people of Kashmir, George Forster<sup>24</sup>**

I never knew a national body of men more impregnated with the principles of vice, than the natives of Kashmire. The character of a Kashmirian is conspicuously seen, when invested with official power. Supported by an authority which prescribes no limits to its agents, in the accumulation of public emoluments, the Kashmirian displays the genuine composition of his mind.



He becomes intent on immediate aggrandizement, without rejecting any instrument which can promote his purpose. Rapacious and arrogant, he evinces in all his actions, deceit, treachery, and that species of refined cruelty, which usually actuates the conduct of a coward. And it is said, that he is equally fickle in his connections, as implacable in enmity. In behalf of humanity, I could wish not to have been capacitated to exhibit so disgusting a picture, which being constantly held out to me for near three months, in various lights, but with little relief, impressed me with a general dislike of mankind.

The Kashmirians are so whimsically curious that when any trivial question is proposed to them, its intention and purpose is enquired into with a string of futile interrogatories, before the necessary information is given; and a shopkeeper rarely acknowledges the possession of a commodity, until he is apprized of the quantity required. In examining the situation in which these people have been placed, with its train of relative effects, the speculative moralist will, perhaps, discover one of the larger sources from whence this cast of manners and disposition has arisen. He will perceive that the singular position of their country, its abundant and valuable produce, with a happy climate, tend to excite strong inclinations to luxury and effeminate pleasures; and he is aware, that to counteract causes, naturally tending to enervate and corrupt the mind, a system of religion or morality is necessary to inculcate the love of virtue, and especially, to impress the youth with early sentiments of justice and humanity. But he will evidently see, that neither the religious or the moral precepts of the present race of Mahometans contain the principles of rectitude or philanthropy; that, on the contrary, they are taught to look with abhorrence on the fairest portion of the globe, and to persecute and injure those who are not inclosed in the fold of their prophet. Seeing then the Kashmirians, presiding as it were at the fountain head of pleasure, neither guided or checked by any principle or example of virtue, he will not be surprized, that they give a wide scope to the passions of the mind and the enjoyments of the body.

### **3. The natives of Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>25</sup>**

The natives of Kashmir have been always considered as amongst the most lively and ingenious people of Asia, and deservedly so. With a liberal and wise government they might assume an equally high scale as a moral and intellectual people, but at present a more degraded race does not exist.

#### **Appearance**

The complexion of the Kashmirians varies from dark to olive, and is sometimes ruddy and transparent: the eyes are large and full, the nose is well defined, and commonly of an aquiline form. The stature varies, but the Hindus



who have least intermixed with foreign races are, in general, tall and symmetrically made. The inhabitants of the city are rather slight, but amongst the peasantry, both Hindu and Mohammedan, are to be found figures of robust and muscular make, such as might have served for models of the Farnesian Hercules.

### **Character**

In character the Kashmirian is selfish, superstitious, ignorant, supple, intriguing, dishonest, and false: he has great ingenuity as a mechanic, and a decided genius for manufactures and commerce, but his transactions are always conducted in a fraudulent spirit, equaled only by the effrontery with which he faced detection. The vices of the Kashmirian I cannot help considering, however, as the effects of his political condition, rather than his nature, and conceive that it would not be difficult to transform him into a very different being. Religious bigotry forms no part of his character, and the teachers of either faith, Mullas or Pundits, are exceedingly ignorant, and possesses little influence. Since the establishment of the Sikh authority Hinduism predominates, and the country is infested by numerous and audacious bands of mendicants. They are patronized rather by the Government than the people, and the latter would gladly get rid of their presence. There seems, indeed, to be little attachment of either the Mohammedans or Hindus of Kashmir to their respective creeds, and I am convinced there is no part of India where the pure religion of the Gospel might be introduced with a fairer prospect of success.

## **E. PEOPLE OF KANGRA, GEORGE FORSTER<sup>26</sup>**

The Mountaineers invariably reserved the beard, and, instead of bowing the head in salutation, as in Lower India, they embrace the party addressed, and, incline the head over his left shoulder. The growth of the beard is encouraged, perhaps, from a certain ferocity of disposition incident to their situation, and generally predominant in the disposition of Mountaineers, which prompts them, in different modes, to shew a disdain and contempt for the softer manners of the natives of the low country.

The women have the olive complexion, are delicately shaped, and evince a freedom in their manner, which, without a tendency to immodesty, or connected with the habits of licentiousness, seems the result of the common confidence reposed in them by the men: I have seen a woman stop, though carrying a pot of water, and converse unreservedly with passengers, giving them an information of the road, or any other ordinary intelligence. Their dress consists of a petticoat, with a border, usually of different colours; a close jacket,



covering half of the waist; and a loose stomacher to the fore part of it, which reaches to the girdle. Their hair, which they hold in as high an estimation as that beautiful appendage can be regarded by the gayest females of Europe, is plaited with black silk, or cotton strings, and falls down the back; over which they throw, in a graceful fashion, a veil which seldom touches, and never wholly conceals, the face.

## **F. PEOPLE OF KUMAON, BISHOP HEBER<sup>27</sup>**

Of the inhabitants every body seems to speak well. They are, indeed, dirty to a degree which I never saw among Hindoos, and extremely averse to any improvement in their rude and inefficient agriculture, but they are honest, peaceable, and cheerful, and, in the species of labour to which they are accustomed, extremely diligent. There are hardly twelve convicts now in the goal of Almorah; and the great majority of cases which come before Mr. Traill are trifling affrays, arising from disputed boundaries, trespass, and quarrels at fair and markets. The only serious public cases which are at all prevalent, are adultery, and sometimes, carrying off women to marry them forcibly. They use their women ill, and employ them in the most laborious tasks, in which, indeed, a wife is regarded by the Khasya peasant as one of the most laborious and valueable of his domestic animals. These people, though rigid Hindoos, are not so inhospitable as their brethren of the plain. Even Europeans travelling through the country who will put up such accommodations as the peasantry have to offer, are almost sure of being well received, and have no need of carrying tents with them, provided their journey is made at a time when the peasantry are at home to receive them, and not during the annual emigration to the plains.

## **G. THE GURKHAS**

### **1. Hardy warriors, Godfrey Charles Mundy<sup>28</sup>**

The next morning the mountaineer coolies arrived, and a strange ill-favoured race they are. In their high cheeks, long narrow eyes, broad fronts, and narrow chins, they bear an evident affinity to the Tartar. Their stature is very short, but they are wide-chested and strongly limbed, and show prodigious strength in carrying burdens up the steep mountain tracks. The Gourkahs, in our wars with them, proved the enemies best worthy of the British arms in India. It is said that these hardy little warriors speak with the greatest contempt of their gigantic long bearded neighbours the Seikhs. They make first-rate tirailleurs, and at the siege of Bhurtpore one of the Company's Gourkah



regiments much distinguished itself. They appeared on that occasion, somewhat pigmy by the side of our British grenadiers, their average height being barely 5 feet.

## **2. Gurkhas, Fanny Eden<sup>29</sup>**

...Colonel Young, who is the chief man here, commands a most interesting native regiment, the Gourkas. I should say they will fight less well now we have brought them down to our English drilling and nonsense, but there was a time, when four or five hundred of them in their hills beat our troops considerably and kept beating them for a whole year. They are the most dwarfish race that I ever saw and look like a little set of children in their dark uniforms. Last year a party of them fell in with a tiger on the road we travelled yesterday. They were on foot and had no guns, but they made a circle round him, and when he charged one side they cut at him on the other with their swords, and so killed him.

## **H. THE CHURRA PEOPLE, WILLIAM GRIFFITH<sup>30</sup>**

Regarding the natives, I have little to say. They are a stout-built, squat, big-legged hill tribe: the women in regard to shape being exactly like their mates; and as these are decided ugly – somewhat tartarish-looking people, very dirty, and chew pawn to profusion – they can scarcely be said to form a worthy portion of the gentler sex. They appear to be honest; but that is a quality which, from the example of their European lords, they are said to be losing fast. They have no written character; every thing being transmitted by tradition, and performed by the interchange of tokens. They drink like fish, and manufacture a bad kind of arrack, the pernicious effects of which were experienced by the European invalids when the Sanatorium was in existence. They pay respect to their dead by the erection of a sort of kairns and large erect slabs of sandstone rounded off at the upper end: of these, I believe, they put up three or five to each friend, according to their means and, probably, rank. The Churra people cultivate nothing but a little cotton, and perhaps a species of Eleusine. They depend upon the plains for their support and supplies, and this is good management, since rice at Terrya Ghat is sold at 70 or 80 seers a rupee. Their hire is, considering the cheapness of their food, very expensive; a man being rated at four annas a day, a woman at three, and a boy at two. I should add, that they have no caste.



## **I. THE BHOOTEAHS, BISHOP HEBER<sup>31</sup>**

Between it [Nundidevi] and the Chinese frontier, two remarkable races of men are found, the first the Bhooteahs, a Mongolian tribe, worshippers of the Delai Lama, who are said to be the descendants of one of the herdes who crossed the snowy mountains with Tamerlane; the other, a savage race, who neither plough nor dig, but live by the chace and on wild fruits only. They call themselves the original inhabitants of the soil, and appear to be the same people with the Puharrees of Rajmahal. I saw some Bhooteahs during my stay at Almorah, who had come down with a cargo of "chowries," tails of the "yak," or mountain-ox. They are a short square-built people, with the true Calmuk countenance and eye, and with the same remarkable cheerfulness of character and expression, by which the Calmuk tribes are in general distinguished. Their dress was also completely Tartar, large boots with their trowsers stuffed into them, caftans girded round the waist, and little bonnets edged with black sheep's skin.

## **J. THE LEPCHAS, JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER<sup>32</sup>**

An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer, as he is timid, peaceful, and no brawler; qualities which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west: of whom the Ghorkas are brave and warlike to a proverb, and the Bhotanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel. A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They are of short stature – four feet eight inches to five feet – rather broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently Tartar character, flat-nosed and oblique-eyed, with no beard, and little moustache; the complexion is sallow, or often a clear olive; the hair is collected into an immense tail, plaited flat or round. The lower limbs are powerfully developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild, frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the absence of anything unpleasing, than to the presence of direct grace or beauty. In like manner, the girls are often very engaging to look upon, though without one good feature: they are all smiles and good-nature; and the children are frank, lively, laughing urchins. The old women are thorough hags. Indolence, when left to themselves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employment, and their foulness of person and garments



renders them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are supportable out of doors. Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather, and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution. In disposition they are amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and unrestrained. Their intercourse with one another and with Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter. They are constantly armed with a long, heavy, straight knife, but never draw it on one another: family and political feuds are alike unheard of amongst them.

The Lepcha is in morals far superior to his Tibet and Bhotan neighbours, polyandry being unknown, and polygamy rare. This is no doubt greatly due to the conventual system not being carried to such an excess as in Bhotan, where the ties of relationship even are disregarded.

Like the New Zealander, Tasmanian, Fuegian, and natives of other climates, which, though cold, are moist and equable, the Lepcha's dress is very scanty, and when we are wearing woollen under-garments and hose, he is content with one cotton vesture, which is loosely thrown round the body, leaving one or both arms free; it reaches to the knee, and is gathered round the waist: its fabric is close, the ground colour white, ornamented with longitudinal blue stripes, two or three fingers broad, prettily worked with red and white. When new and clean, this garb is remarkably handsome and gay, but not showy. In cold weather an upper garment with loose sleeves is added. A long knife, with a common wooden handle, hangs by the side, stuck in a sheath; he has often also a quiver of poisoned arrows and a bamboo bow across his back. On his right wrist is a curious wooden guard for the bowstring; and a little pouch, containing aconite poison and a few common implements, is suspended to his girdle. A hat he seldom wears, and when he does, it is often extravagantly broad and flat-brimmed, with a small hemispherical crown. It is made of leaves of *Scitamineae* between two thin plates of bamboo-work, clumsy and heavy; this is generally used in the rainy weather, while in the dry a conical one is worn, also of platted-slips of bamboo, with broad flakes of tale between the layers, and a peacock's feather at the side. The umbrella consists of a large hood, much like the ancient boat called a coracle, which being placed over the head reaches to the thighs behind. It is made of platted bamboo, enclosing broad leaves of *Phrynium*. A group of Lepchas with these on, running along in the pelting rain, are very droll figures; they look like



snails with their shells on their backs. All the Lepchas are fond of ornaments, wearing silver hoops in their ears, necklaces made of cornelian, amber, and turquoise, brought from Tibet, and pearls and corals from the south, with curious silver and golden charm-boxes or amulets attached to their necks or arms. These are of Tibetan workmanship, and often of great value: they contain little idols, charms and written prayers, or the bones, hair, or nail-parings of a Lama: some are of great beauty, and highly ornamented. In these decorations, and in their hair, they take some pride, the ladies frequently dressing the latter for the gentlemen: thus one may often see, the last thing at night, a damsel of discreet port, demurely go behind a young man, unplait his pig-tail, tease the hair, thin it of some of its lively inmates, braid it up for him, and retire. The women always wear two braided pig-tails, and it is by this they are most readily distinguished from their effeminate-looking partners, who wear only one. When in full dress, the woman's costume is extremely ornamental and picturesque; besides the shirt and petticoat she wears a small sleeveless woollen cloak, of gay pattern, usually covered with crosses, and fastened in front by a girdle of silver chains. Her neck is loaded with silver chains, amber necklaces etc. and her head adorned with a coronet of scarlet cloth, studded with seed-pearls, jewels, glass beads, etc. The common dress is a long robe of indi, a cloth of coarse silk, spun from the cocoon of a large caterpillar that is found wild at the foot of the hills, and is also cultivated; it feeds on many different leaves, Sal (*Shorea*), castor-oil, etc.

## K. THE PEOPLE OF BENGAL

### 1. Attached to religion, Thomas Twining<sup>33</sup>

Its population consists almost exclusively of Hindoos: a quiet, inoffensive, industrious, submissive people, possessing little energy, less courage, and no ambition; concerning themselves not much about their own government, and not at all about the government of any other country; more frugal and abstemious than any other nation, and perhaps equal to any other nation, not in enlightened acquirements or refined precepts of philosophy, but in natural capacity and practical morality; attached, above all things, to their religion, which is always before them, from the uprising of the sun to the going down of the same – it enters into all the concerns of their daily life, it regulates the minutest detail of their domestic affairs. They feel, not an impetuous, ostentatious enthusiasm, but a quiet yet deeply profound sentiment of passive devotion, which excluding, unhappily, the light of reflection and reason, perpetuates from age to age, and from generation to generation, the errors and extravagances of a primeval superstition. But multiplied and impenetrable as seem to be the defences which thus encompass and preserve



the prejudices of the Hindoos, there can be no doubt that these will at last give way to the persuasive influence of Christian communication and instruction, if duly seconded by the effect of *Christian example*; provided that this great and desirable work, this best result of our dominion in the East, be not frustrated by acts of impatient zeal or *offensive* interference.

## 2. Anglicised Natives in Calcutta, Honoria Lawrence<sup>34</sup>

The richer natives in Calcutta are imitating European manners, equipages, and buildings.... It is the universal feeling that in Calcutta, where the wealthier natives mix a good deal with Europeans, their Hindoo prejudices are fast giving way, not, I fear, to the Gospel but to English science and literature. Good however must be done by the extension of knowledge, and by a breach being made in the seven fold shield of *dustoor* (custom) which has so long defied improvement.

We were struck when reading the observations in *Saturday Evening* on the Grecianising Jews how much they applied to the Anglicised Hindoos of Calcutta. European female teachers are employed as day governesses of some rich natives and I heard a very intelligent Englishman, who had been long in the country, notice the great change when respectable native ladies were seen taking a drive in an open carriage. Some Hindoo gentlemen even eat with Europeans, and at the Hindu College the youths are instructed in the English language and literature. Though they nominally continue Hindoos, they are in fact Deists. Government seminaries for the diffusion of education without any direct attempt at proselytising are established in all large stations. One lad who had been brought up at the college used frequently to come to Major Hutchinson. He was a fine, intelligent looking fellow, who seemed thirsty after information. He had a pretty correct idea of the outline of Christianity and spoke of the absurdities of Hindooism but seemed untouched at heart by either "the sinfulness of sin", or the beauty of holiness. This lad spoke English very well, and one day brought us a composition of his own in that language, rambling essay on the advantage of science.

In the Indian papers and journals there are frequent contributions from the students, generally correct as to grammar, and shewing a considerable knowledge of our standard authors, but the questions are elaborately brought in and the style is universally bad, inflated, full of false metaphor and frequently a mere caricature of Gibbon's inversions and circumlocutions.

The sensuality of Hindoo faith and practice is so gross that to them the self denying doctrines of Christianity must be peculiarly distasteful, and the daily habits of falsehood and licentiousness must almost incapacitate their minds from comprehending the Christian standard of morals.



## L. PEOPLE OF THE DOAB, BISHOP HEBER<sup>35</sup>

Both men and women, whom we met on the road, I thought decidedly taller, fairer, and finer people than the Bengalees. Some of the Sepoys, indeed, of a regiment who passed us, were of complexions so little darker than those of Europe, that as they approached I really at first took them for Europeans. Every thing seems to assimilate gradually to the scenes and habits of the eastern and southern parts of Europe. The people no longer talk of their daily *rice*, but say "it is time to eat *bread* to-day." Instead of the softness and gentleness so apparent in those Indians whom we first saw, these men have a proud step, a stern eye, and a rough loud voice, such as might be expected from people living almost always in the open air, and in a country where, till its acquisition by the English, no man was sure that he might not at any moment be compelled to fight for his life or property. Much of this necessity is passed away, but something, yet remains.

## M. THE BHEELS, BISHOP HEBER<sup>36</sup>

We arrived at Wasnud... The Bheels were to be our watchmen as well as guides; and their shrill calls from one to the other were heard all night. We were told not to be surprised at this choice, since these poor thieves are, when trusted, the trustiest of men, and of all sentries the most wakeful and indefatigable. They and the Kholees [Kolis], a race almost equally wild, are uniformly preferred in Guzerat for the service of the police, and as durwans to gentlemen's houses and gardens. All such persons are here called Sepoys, and with more accuracy than the regular troops, inasmuch as their weapons are still really the bow and arrow, "sip," whence the Asiatic soldier derives his appellation.

## N. THE KOLIS, BISHOP HEBER<sup>37</sup>

...[The] Kholees, or, as they are pretty generally called, Coolies,... form perhaps two-thirds of the population, and are considered by public men in Guzerat as the original inhabitants of the country, a character which, I know not why, they refuse to the Bheels, who here, as in Malwah, seem to have the best title to it. I suspect, indeed, myself, that the Coolies are only civilised Bheels, who have laid aside some of the wild habits of their ancestors, and who have learned, more particularly, to conform in certain respects, such as abstinence from beef, &c. to their Hindoo neighbours. They themselves pretend to be descended from the Rajpoots, but this is a claim continually made by



wild and warlike tribes all over India, and it is made, more particularly by the Puharree villagers at the foot of Rajmahal, who have embraced the Hindoo religion; and that the Coolies themselves do not believe their claim, is apparent from the fact that they neither wear the silver badge, nor the red turban. Be this as it may, they are acknowledged by the Hindoos as their kindred, which the Bheels never are; and though their claim of being children of the sun is not allowed by the Rajpoots who live among them, there have been instances in which intermarriages have taken place between Maharattas of high rank and the families of some of their most powerful chieftains.

Their ostensible, and, indeed, their chief employment, is agriculture, and they are said to be often industrious farmers and labourers, and, while kindly treated, to pay their rent to Government as well, at least, as their Rajpoot neighbours. They live, however, under their own Thakoors, whose authority alone they willingly acknowledge, and pay little respect to the laws, unless when it suits their interest, or they are constrained by the presence of an armed force. In other respects they are one of the most turbulent and predatory tribes in India, and with the Bheels, make our tenure of Guzerat more disturbed, and the maintenance of our authority more expensive there, than in any other district of the Eastern empire....

### **O. THE PATELS OF GUJARAT, BISHOP HEBER<sup>38</sup>**

The Potails of Guzerat are very inferior in dress, manners, and general appearance, to the Zemindars of Hindostan. Their manner, however, though less polished, is more independent; and here, as in Central India, instead of standing with joined hands in the presence of a superior, they immediately sit down even if they do not advance to embrace him. Almost all of them, as well as their Ryuts, and indeed all the inhabitants of the country, are armed, some with bows and arrows, and all, or nearly all, with sabres. Their dress is generally ragged and dirty, and they seem to pay less attention to personal cleanliness than any Hindoos whom I have met with. Some of the peasants who were assembled were tall stout men, but the average were considerably under the middle size...

### **P. SINDHIS**

- 1. James Burnes, Residency doctor at Bhuj in Kutch, visited Sindh in 1827 at the invitation of the Talpur court. In a detailed account of his experiences, he noted the harsh treatment of the Hindus in the state<sup>39</sup>**

It is really difficult to conceive how any Hindoos should have continued



to reside in this country; and the fact can only be accounted for by that attachment, which man shares with the vegetable, to the soil in which he is reared. The indignities they suffer are of the most exasperating description. They are even forced to adopt the Mahommedan dress, and to wear beards. Till lately, none of this class were permitted to ride on horse-back; and amongst the few who now enjoy the privilege, a small number only in the immediate service of government are allowed the comfort and honour, as it is esteemed, of a saddle. Merchants of wealth and respectability may be seen mounted on asses and mules; animals considered so unclean, that none but the vilest outcasts in other countries can touch them with impunity: and, even from this humble conveyance, they are obliged to descend and stand aside when any bloated Mussulman passes by.

The Mahommedans are encouraged and exhorted to destroy all the emblems of idolatry they may see in Sindh. The degraded and unfortunate follower of Brahma, is denied the free exercise of his religion; the *tom-tom* is seldom heard, being only beat when permission is granted; and although there are a few temples without images in Hyderabad, the sound of music never echoes from their walls. It is in the power of any two "true believers," by declaring that a Hindoo has repeated a verse from the Koran, or the words "Mahommed the Prophet," to procure his immediate circumcision. This is the most common, and, by the persecuted class themselves, considered the most cruel of all their calamities; while, as it is resorted to on the slightest pretence, and always performed with a mockery of its being for the eternal happiness of the sufferer, mental agony is made to add its bitterness to bodily infliction...

Of their summary mode of administering justice towards Hindoos, I had myself an opportunity of judging... On my remonstrating against this extremity, his Highness replied with a savage grin, "You do not know the Hindoos of Sindh; they are all blackguards and rascals"...."

[Burnes found "the evils of intolerance" glaring and concluded it was scarcely possible for a stranger to be a week in Sindh without that "being obtruded on his notice;" he noted that] amongst the many who secretly pray for such a consummation, none seemed to have a more devout wish to see the British colours flying on the bastions of Hyderabad, than the Hindoos of respectability; who, uninvited, entered on the subject of their grievances, and discoursed largely of the cruelties and indignities to which they were subjected.

## **2. Hindus do not lead enviable lives in Sindh, Charles Masson<sup>40</sup>**

The Hindus, who, as in the neighbouring countries, carry on, nearly exclusively, the trade, led a far from enviable life, unless, indeed, their gains compensated from the contumely with which they were treated, for throughout



Sind a Hindu cannot pass from one village to another without paying a fee to some Mahomedan for his protection.

### **3. Hindus in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>41</sup>**

The Hindoo portion of the community occupies, in Sindh, the same social position that the Mussulmans do in India. As in Arabia, Affghanistan and other parts of Central Asia, the Hindoo here is either employed in trade, or in ministering to the religious wants of his caste-brethren. We, therefore, find among them none of the properly speaking outcast tribes (as Parwari, Mang, Chandala and others) so numerous in their own country. It is probable that few or none of the Hindoo families that flourished in Sindh at the time of the first Moslem inroad have survived the persecution to which they were then subjected: most likely they either emigrated or were converted to Islam. The present race is of Punjabi origin, as their features and manners, ceremonies and religious opinions, as well as their names, sufficiently prove. It may be observed that they show a general tendency towards the faith of Nanak Shah, and that many castes have so intermingled the religion of the Sikh with their original Hinduism, that we can scarcely discern the line of demarcation.

As usual among the Hindoo race, wherever it is settled, they have divided themselves into different tribes. The Satawarna, or seven castes of Indians, in Sindh, are as follows:- 1. Brahman; 2. Lohano; 3. Bhatio; 4. Sahto; 5. Waishya (including a number of trades as Wahun, grain-toaster; Khatti, dyer, &c.); 6. Punjabi; and 7. Sonaro.

Five of these belong, properly speaking, to the Waishya (the third, or merchant) division of pure Indians. The seventh is a mixed caste, descended from a Brahman father and a Shudra mother. In Sindh he is usually considered as belonging to the servile tribe.

Of the first, or Brahminical class, we find two great bodies, which are divided and subdivided as usual. These are – 1. Pokarno; 2. Sarsat or Sarsudh.

### **4. The Amils in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>42</sup>**

The typical class of Hindoos in Sindh is the Lohano Amil (or officer in government employ); a short description of the different rites and ceremonies, as performed by that caste, will therefore suffice to give the reader a general view of Hindooism as now existing in the province.

The Amil class was created by the exigencies of the native rulers, who could not collect or dispose of their revenues without the assistance of Hindoos. Throughout the east, the people least fitted for any business in which calculation is required, are the Moslems; and even the old Ameers, with all their hatred and contempt of Kafirs, were obliged to own the superiority of the Infidel over the Faithful in this one point. The princes that followed them lost a great



portion of the ancient bigotry, and became very careless of caste; I have seen one of the chiefs of the present family embrace a Hindoo Diwan with as little repugnance as he would have shown to a Sayyid of the purest blood. When the Hindoo found that he was necessary to his lords, he made the best use of his acuteness and readiness, and soon succeeded in improving his political standing in the country. Thus, most probably arose the Kardar system, which, though of a totally different nature, is in Sindh what the Patell and his little republic are in India. After gaining a certain footing, the Amils began to abuse their powers. The native rulers had two great checks over their officers; capital punishment and torture. A Hindoo who went too far, was liable to be beaten to death with clubs and thorny sticks, or buried up to the neck in the ground; for minor offences a Tobra, or horse's grain-bag, full of red pepper well pounded was put over his head; he might be hung up to a tree by his legs, with pots of sand fastened to his arms; have a few scorpions introduced into his pantaloons, or undergo the discipline of the Billi (she-cat), a peculiar instrument furnished with hooks to tear the flesh. Such extreme measures however were seldom resorted to, and the subjects of native governments generally are not terrified by the prospect of the severest penalties, because they may fairly calculate the chance of evading them. So it was in Sindh. No Ameer could consider himself safe from the most impudent frauds.

...Though cowardly in action, they [the Amils] were brave in endurance, and the rulers have sometimes owned that they were fatigued with torturing them before the tortured seemed tired of the torture. The dexterity with which they forged documents, orders and seals, was acquired by long and diligent practice. Some were so skilful that they could copy the impression of a seal ring with pen and ink, and disguise the forgery by slightly rubbing it with the thumb. Another, but a less favourite way was, after procuring an old impression, to revive it, and then stamp it upon a bit of moist paper. This second impression was given touched up and stamped on the part of the deed where the seal is generally placed. The usual way of forging a seal was to take a little wet Met (clay), and, after cutting it into the requisite shape, to apply it to one of the best impressions that could be procured. A penknife (if much delicacy was required an instrument made on purpose) was then used to pick out the parts left white on the clay, and by this means they formed a seal which could safely be used ten or twelve time. Thus the finest and most complicated seals, cut in India and used by our politicals, were so successfully imitated that none but a professional graver could detect the fraud. Sometimes wax was substituted for the Met; but it never was so favourite a material on account of its being so liable to be spoiled. When all schemes failed, some Amils would go directly to the Wejhan-Waro (seal cutter) and bribe him to assist them. This, however, was a hazardous experiment, as all seal gravers were known to the officials,



and detection would have led to a severe punishment. The skill of the Amil in forging documents was not inferior to his other acquirements. In simple cases, after the deed was written out, it was sufficient to lick the paper, place it between the ground and a dusty carpet or rug, and stamp upon the later till the ink lost the gloss.

In appearance the Amils are more robust and better looking men than the common Sindhis. Some of them are remarkably athletic in form, and their features are frequently regular and agreeable. They were compelled by the Moslems to adopt the costume of the Faithful, such as the Sindhi cap and drawers, to cultivate long beards, and shave only the crown of the head. They do not, however, trim the mustachios according to the Sunnat; moreover, they affix the Tilak or sectarian mark, and wear shirts with the opening down the left breast, to distinguish them from the Mussulmans. They delight in rich dress, and indeed are, generally speaking, fond of show and expenditure, offering in this point a contrast to the parsimonious Hindoo of India. Their religious opinions are the same as those of the Lohana who are engaged in trade, and they use similar food. In consequence, however, of superior education, and perpetually mixing with members of another faith, not a few of these Amils are Dahri, or materialists.

### **5. The inhabitants of Sindh, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>43</sup>**

The inhabitants of Sinde are Mahometans and Hindoos; of the former, the Belooches belong to the caste of warriors, and the Juts to that of the peasants: and it may be assumed that the fifty part of the inhabitants of the cites are Hindoos. Though so greatly oppressed in their religious and civil relations, the wealth and commerce of the country are nevertheless chiefly in their hands; and they probably form a sixth part of the million of inhabitants said to reside in this country. They suffer their beard to grow, and wear the turban of the Mussulmans, whose manners and customs they have adopted; they have the submissiveness and servility of the Jews of Europe, and are as handsome, but even more dirty than the Juts. As bankers, they enjoy such confidence that their bills pass current throughout India.

The Hindoos and the Juts are the only people on whom the British government can depend. The Juts, who are a tall, vigorous, and handsome race of people, were originally Hindoos, and, properly speaking, are the Aborigines of the country; the women are distinguished by their beauty and modesty, which cannot be said of the Mahometan females. As they form the agricultural class, they had a quiet and peaceful life. Besides the cultivation of the soil the Juts are occupied in the breed of buffaloes, goats, and camels. The camel is as valuable and useful to the Jut, as the horse is to the Arab.

The Miani are employed in navigation and fishery; they live as much



upon the rivers and lakes as on shore – nay, some of them have no other dwelling than their boat. The women are as vigorous, and muscular as the men, and share in their hard labours; and while the husband is mending his nets, or smoking his pipe, and the child is suspended in its network cradle to the mast, the wife guides the boat with a large oar.

The Belooches, who form scarcely a tenth part of the population, are the freebooters of the desert, and originally came from the mountains and steppes in the north-west. Their manners, and many of their customs are conformable with the mosaic laws, and their oral and written traditions, as well as their general appearance, have so much resemblance with those of the Jews, that the Belooches have been looked upon as the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Thus for instance, on the death of the husband, his brother is bound to marry his widow and the children are the heirs of the deceased; and again, a man may divorce his wife, according to the forms usual among the Jews. They consider themselves as the masters of the country, and devote themselves to arms, robbery, and the chase. Some few of them engage in agriculture, and all attend to the breeding of horses and camels. Their ignorance, and the uncivilised state in which they live, renders it difficult to reduce them to obedience and discipline: each tribe obeys only its chief; but if danger threatens any one tribe, messengers on camels and horses, are dispatched in every direction to summon all that can bear arms...

The Belooches, in their capacity of executors of the commands of the Ameers, are the blood-suckers of the poor, oppressed peasant, who is obliged to deliver to the princes more than the half of his produce. The revenues of the country, which formerly amounted to 90 lacs, have now declined to between 40 and 50, but with good management his might be increased to three times that sum. The Ameers are as ignorant as the people: their time is spent in the harem, or in hunting, and the latter is pursued with such eagerness that the country is thereby daily more and more depopulated. In order to enlarge their preserves, which consist of Babul trees, a species of *Mimosa Arabica*, tamarinds and tamarisks, they have recourse to the most arbitrary measures. Thus Meer Futteh Ali expelled the inhabitants from one of the most fertile districts of the Indus, near Hyderabad, which produced a revenue of nearly two lacs, because it was the favourite haunt of the Babiroussa; and Meer Murad Ali caused a large village to be totally destroyed, in order that the lowing of the cattle and crowing of the cocks, might not disturb the game in an adjoining preserve belonging to his brother. In the middle of this preserve is a small isolated building with a pond in front of it; thither the game is driven and killed by the Ameers who are stationed behind the wall...



**Q. THE SIAPOSH KAFIRS OR BLACK-CLAD INFIDELS  
INHABITING THE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS NORTH  
OF LUGHMAN AND KHONAR, AND BETWEEN THE  
COURSES OF THE NADJIL AND KAMEH RIVERS,  
CHARLES MASSON<sup>44</sup>**

As regards the language, or dialect spoken by the Siaposh, there can be no doubt but that they have one, which, as Sherifadin has recorded, is neither exactly Persian, nor Turki, nor Hindi. It is remarkable that on the south western, and southern borders of the Siaposh country, or in those points where it connects with the actual limits of the Kabal and Jelalabad territories, there are four distinct dialects spoken, independently of the more prevailing ones of Persian, Afghani, Turki and Hindi. The dialects in question are called Perancheh, Pashai, Lughmani, and Kohistani....

Of these four dialects, the Kohistani most nearly approaches to Hindi; and, on listening to people conversing therein, I was able, without comprehending the whole of what was said, to understand the general purport of their discourse.

**Siaposh religion**

On the primary subject of religion, reports and opinions are too vague and various to admit even a plausible conjecture to be made. The furious Mahomedan will not concede that they have any; while the less zealous pretend that they reverence trees, and other inanimate objects. The Hindu believes them to cherish, in their retreats, his own anomalous creed, and that they perform puja, on altars. From the testimony, however, of the Siaposh whose fate has made them captives, it is clear that they have some kind of worship and that their deity is named Dagon. The topic is one on which they dislike to be questioned, either that they are incompetent to reply, or that amongst Mahomedans they feel delicacy in expressing their sentiments. It may be supposed that a strange medley of rites and superstitions prevails among them. While as tenacious of their religion, whatever it may be, as of their liberty in their mountain fastnesses, the Siaposh captive, without hesitation, becomes a Mahomedan, and manifests no aversion to abandon his old faith. It need not be remarked how different would be the conduct of the most wretched Hindu on such an occasion...

They are said to shave the hair of their heads, allowing only a tuft to remain on the crown. In this they assimilate, indeed, to Hindus; but there are also many Mahomedan tribes that do the same. Chiefs, and sons of chiefs, insert their tufts in leathern rings, a token by which, it is believed, they may be distinguished.







## **Festivals and Fairs**

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- A. Festivals**
- B. Scenes from fairs**
- C. Jugglers, etc.**

### **A. FESTIVALS**

#### **1. Festivals of the East – 'Perfect harmony and good-nature,' Marianne Postans<sup>1</sup>**

The festivals of the East, are curious to the researcher into the manners of the ancient nations; and become interesting to the mere observer of the passing scene, from the circumstance of all restraint being banished from the manners of the people, and replaced by gaiety and good-feeling; at these seasons of national mirth, the oft seemingly timid, and gentle Hindoo, gives licence to his genuine dispositions, and laughs, sings, and adorns himself with garlands, as if he still inherited his native soil, in a happy state of constitutional freedom; it is at these periods that his character may perhaps be best discerned. It is the peculiar effect of joyous impulses, to banish suspicion from the mind, and, as they open the flood gates of natural feeling, to remove from the countenance all that forced, and assumed expression, which self-interest and cunning suggest, as necessary to be adopted by men, who have inherited oppression as their birth-right, and can hope for no sympathy from these, whom they have only learnt to recognize as the masters of that soil, which their forefathers once trod, in freedom and security.

The native population of India are peculiarly reserved in their intercourse with us, and are perpetually supporting a character foreign of their nature, and the result of the circumstances which surround them. Their prejudices of caste prevent our having any intercourse with them of a social nature; and their religious ceremonies are less known from personal observation, than from the



communications of intelligent natives, which, after all we can acquire, little informs us on the real character, manners, and feelings of the people, when removed from the restraints of foreign espionage. It is therefore only on festive occasions, when the populations of the towns seek the plains and neighbouring country, for the purpose of diversion, that they appear in a natural and unaffected character and the result of the observation is, that the Hindoos are a peculiarly social people, delighting in raillery, and easily excited to gaiety and mirth. An Asiatic crowd unites a greater variety of picturesque effect than any other in the world, and the most perfect harmony and good-nature prevail among its members. The older persons gossip, and exchange jests on each other, not deficient in wit; and the younger parties stroll about, with their arms encircling each other's necks, exchanging the most gentle and endearing epithets, as they laugh and chat, on whatever may be the object of attraction; unassailed by temptations to intemperance, its brutalizing effects never shade the pastimes of these inoffensive people; good nature supplies the place of the constable's baton, and every one is merry himself, without seeking his advantages at the price of a neighbour's inconvenience. The scene is one of amiable courtesy.

## **2. Ganesh puja, John Burnell<sup>2</sup>**

The Gentiles have several days in the year set apart for feasting or solemn occasions, as the Devally, or Ganess Choutha, which falls out about the latter end of July or the first full moon before or after the end of that month, and lasteth several days, at which times they divert themselves with divers pastimes and have free recourse to the gaming ordinaries.

## **DURGA PUJA**

### **3(a) Durga Puja at Calcutta, James Mitchell<sup>3</sup>**

29<sup>th</sup> (August, 1748)...in September, the Gentoo's grand annual Feast was celebrated by every individual that by parsimony and hoarding throughout the year could afford the expense; a great emulation prevailing on that occasion to excel in show and Splendour. At the upper end of a large oblong Hall decorated with figured Chintz hangings, large wax candles &ca., day being excluded, on a Pedestal raised from the Floor by a flight of Steps under a Canopy with Curtains of rich silk or Chintz is placed a hideous figure of painted wood superbly dressed with Jewels, Pearls &ca. to represent Jagernaut [a mistake, the image is of Durga], their favourite Deity. On each side the Hall are covered Tables with benches furnished with all delicacies of the Country; and one with the choicest Viands and Liquors for such Europeans as are



admitted. When a Gentoo enters he approaches by the Area in the middle of the Hall with much seeming devotion to the foot of the Steps and having made a low obeisance and short Prayer retires to his place at one of the Tables. Music, Dancing Girls with very Festivity that can be devised is exhibited for two days; on the third the Idol is placed in a Budjero or Barge with a procession of much pomp, accompanied with the country music and embellished with Flags, Streamers &ca., and rowed to the middle of the River, covered with numbers of the same description; the air resounding with music, blazing with Fireworks and roaring with repeated discharges of Cannon until the whole is concluded by loud acclamations on throwing Jagernaut [Durga] with all his ornaments from each Budjero into the Ganges the water of which is deemed sacred; it would be considered Sacrilege in a Gentoo to touch any of the floating Idols or their ornaments; but Mahometans and other sectarys think it no impiety to strip them of such ornaments as they judge worth saving and afterwards to split and burn the Image...

#### **(b) Madam Dourga [Durga], De Grandpre<sup>4</sup>**

This madam Dougra, who has deified the Ganges, is held in great veneration: her festival is celebrated every year in the month of October, and while it lasts nothing is known but rejoicing; the natives visit each other, and on three successive evenings assemble together for the adoration of their divinity. Her statute is placed in a small niche of clay, which is gilt and adorned with flowers, pieces of tinsel, and other similar ornaments. The statue itself is dressed in the most magnificent attire they can procure, is about a foot high, and the niche with its appendages about three feet and half. All the rich celebrate a festival of this kind in their own houses, and are ambitious of displaying the greatest luxury, lighting up their apartments in the most splendid manner. Such as cannot afford to observe this solemnity at their own house, go to that of some neighbour: there is one of these celebrations at least in every quarter of the town, so that all the inhabitants have an opportunity of paying their devotions.

#### **4(a) Churuk Poojah, Eliza Fæy<sup>5</sup>**

On the Churuk Poojah [swinging feast] hundreds, I have heard, are suspended at an amazing height by means of hooks finely fixed in the flesh of the back, to which sometimes a cloth is added round the body to afford the miserable victim a chance of escape, should the hook give way. I, by accident (for voluntarily nothing should have tempted me to witness such a spectacle), saw one of these wretches, who was whirling round with surprising rapidity, and at that distance scarcely appeared to retain the semblance of a human



form. They firmly expect by this infliction to obtain pardon of all their offences; and, should death be the consequence, they go straight to heaven, thus changing the horrid state of privation and misery in which they exist here for one of bliss. If such be their real persuasion, who can condemn the result?

**(b) Charrak Puja, Isabella Fane, daughter of Sir Henry Fane, Commander-in-Chief in India from 1835-1839<sup>6</sup>**

This lasts for three days: on the first takes place the ceremony of the unfortunate creatures sticking sharp instruments into various parts of their persons...None but quite the lowest castes undergo these tortures who are paid...by those of higher caste to do it for them. They fortify themselves for what they are to endure by the use of opium and ardent spirits...The crowd was something quite indescribable; but we saw processions of these poor wretches, some with a long iron rod, about six or seven feet in length and the thickness of my little finger, run right through their tongues and, notwithstanding, hopping and skipping. Others had six or seven of these at once stuck into their bodies. I saw one man with a great hole made in his arm and a *live* snake drawn through it!...The following day was to be the swinging by hooks in the back...Although I felt ashamed of my unfeminine curiosity, this exhibition I was resolved not to miss, so I put on a poke bonnet and a veil and off I set in a gig...at five o'clock in the evening. We got a capital situation close to the scene of the action and I had the satisfaction of seeing two men perform as follows. A very high bamboo is stuck into the ground, and at the very tip top of this another is placed horizontally. At each end are ropes. To one, the man is suspended; the other a man holds and twists him round with. Two large hooks are run through a large muscle which I am told is to be found under the shoulder blades, one under each, and then the ropes are fastened to these. The unfortunate man has a band fastened round him besides, so that his *whole* weight does not rest on the hooks, but the very circumstance of their being in his body at all is sufficiently horrid.

**5(a) Holi, Father Wendel<sup>7</sup>**

I think the follies committed by the Indians on this occasion and the crudest foolishness which they say, as in jest, to each other, etc., are too well known to speak of them here at greater length. One must decide to which ancient festivals of other countries the present Indian *holi* should be referred. There are features in common with the Roman Saturnalia, the Cretan Mercurialia, the Bacchanalia etc. I also observe, if I am not mistaken, a certain resemblance to the festum Manipulorum of the Jews, but this is not the appropriate place to dwell further thereon. Muhammad Shah not only



participated in the *holi* festivals, but moreover obliged the Hindus to perpetuate even greater follies and excesses than they had, taking pleasure in listening to the most infamous foolishness which, without fear and with no tact whatsoever, the populace enthusiastically told him.

**(b) Holi, T.D. Broughton<sup>8</sup>**

The festival of the Hohlee is observed by all classes throughout Hindoostan: it is the season of universal merriment and joy; and the sports that take place at its celebration bear some resemblance to those which were allowed in Rome during the Saturnalia. The utmost licence is permitted to all ranks; the men, old and young, parade about the streets, or the camp, in large groups, singing *Kuveers*, or extemporary stanzas, full of the grossest indelicacy, into which they freely introduce the names of their superiors, coupled with the most abominable allusions; the whole party joining in the chorus, and expressing, their delight by loud peals at laughter, hallooing, and almost frantic gestures. An individual sometimes exhibits himself dressed in a most grotesque and indecent manner, as a personification of the Hohlee, and is followed by crowds throwing about the *abeer* and singing the *P,hagoon* songs to the great annoyance of such women as they may happen to meet, whom they delight to attach with the coarsest ribaldry. The ladies, however, are not without their share of the festivities of the season: they make parties at each other's tents or houses; sit up at *Naches* all nights; and play the Hohlee with as much spirit as their male relations. No men, however, are admitted to these select parties, except their husbands; or sometimes their brothers, if they happen to be of a very tender age. Those joyous parties begin within the month of *P,hagoon*, the last of the Hindoo year, and the commencement of the spring. The words *P,hagoon* and *P,hag* are also used to denote the little presents of flowers, fruits, or sweet-meats, which lovers are accustomed to make to their mistresses, as well as the sports and songs peculiar to the season: and when these last are marked with more than ordinary licence, they are termed *Dhumaree*. But the Hohlee songs are not necessarily indelicate: in the following one, Krishna, in his youthful character of *Kunueya*, or the beloved, is described as attacked by a party of the *Gopees*, or maids, of Muttra, during the time of the Hohlee....

The Hohlee, however, strictly speaking, does not commence till the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month; which day is the anniversary of a goddess named *Hohluka*, in whose honour the festival is held. On the last night of the month, the ceremony of burning the Hohlee concludes the festivities. A quantity of wood having been collected for the purpose, a lucky moment is fixed upon for setting fire to the pile. Every family has a small one within their own premises, where they burn little balls of cow-dung strung upon a rope, called *Bulha*; and a



larger one is burned in every street or market place, around which all the neighbours assemble. In the morning, when the fire has burned out, they who have watched it through the night cast the ashes upon one another, and throw them into the air; laughing and hallooing, and repeating for the last time their favourite *Kuveers*. The concluding ceremony is allusive to the demise of the old year now just expired, and expressive of their joy at the approach of the new one now commencing. The riotous crew then bathe themselves, put on clean clothes, and go about to compliment their friends.

**(c) Holi at Dera Ismael Khan, Charles Masson<sup>9</sup>**

During Maha Singh's [agent of Hari Singh, Ranjit Singh's viceroy] stay the Hindu festival of the Huli occurred. It had not before been publicly celebrated by the Hindus, but this year they had not only permission, but the nawab gave a largess of two hundred rupees to his own Hindu soldiers to enable them to divert themselves worthily – only enjoining them to refrain from their joyous demonstrations within the precincts of the citadel, in respect to the feelings of his aged mother. Maha Singh invited me to witness the festivities at his quarters, and was very courteous, although on his arrival he had pronounced me to be an agent of the Company.

**(d) Holi at Lahore, Baron Hugel<sup>10</sup>**

Saturday, January 16 – The Maha Raja sent this morning to say, that if I would not remain in Lahor altogether, he hoped at least that I would not go away before the Huli, which falls about the end of February, and draws to Lahor every dignitary of the empire all their glory. The Huli is a festival celebrated in honour of the god Krishna by Hindus of all classes, and with the wildest sports and dissipation...

The Hindu festival, as I have said, is in honour of Krishna, and represents the manner in which he and his beloved Sita, with their companions, amused themselves. A quality of *Singhara* meal dyed yellow, green, red, and blue, is put into large baskets, and mixed up with little pieces of gold and silver tinsel, a number of large pots of water dyed with the same colours, and little water-engines being set near. Every one appears in white garments, and the festival commences, by the dancing girls sitting down, and breaking forth into a song in honour of the feast. The baskets of coloured meal are then introduced, and thin glass balls full of *Singhara* powder, are distributed to the assembly, which they throw at each other, and being broken with the slightest force discharge their contents on the white dresses, and stain them. Like all games of this description, these begin gently, but soon assume a rougher aspect, each player seizing as many balls as he can, and flinging them at one another. When the



glass balls are exhausted, they take the coloured meal, first, as much as the fingers can hold, then by handfuls, and at last they empty the baskets over each other's heads, covering the whole person. The dirtiest part of the entertainment consists in the sprinkling with the coloured waters. In great houses the Huli is often held in the Zenana, and on those occasions the women are allowed to be present. Spirits are drank, and the amusements are then carried far beyond our European ideas of propriety, but the Hindu thinks no harm of them.

**(e) Indian Carnival, Marianne Postans<sup>11</sup>**

The Hindoos celebrate the burning of the Hooli, at the commencement of the vernal equinox, which has led, perhaps, to its comparison with the Hilaria of the Romans, instituted in honour of the goddess Cybele. In the east, this season is one of unmixed and boundless rejoicing; all restraint is cast aside, and both sexes indulge in every description of sportive mirth. Masquerading processions are common; and the principal actors in the Carnival, disguise themselves as elephants, tigers, goddess or Rajahs, as fancy may decide, all dancing, singing, playing and fencing vigorously together, without the least reference to assumed character. They delight also in playing personal tricks, similar to those common on our 'All-fools' day', deceiving their simple-minded companions with false messages and news. The evenings are devoted to natches, juggling, and fireworks; but it is considered most particularly jocose, to throw handfuls of a red powder, called 'Abir,' over one another, as an imitation of vernal flowers. This the most mischievous mix with alum and oil, and sprinkle on their neighbours' clothes, to the great injury of the said apparel. The lord of misrule alone reigns paramount at the Hooli; all distinction of ranks is lost in its general licence, a woman of respectability dare not leave her house, and even a European officer is not secure from a constrained participation in its frolics. The native officers of the regiments erect a large tent at the extreme end of their lines, where they indulge in the pleasures of a Natch; not only Natch-girls, but boys, habited as such, frequently exhibit on these occasions, but it is not considered a very polished entertainment. The Sepoys consider it a point of etiquette, to invite their European officers; who, in their turn, always attend, and return with their white jackets plentifully sprinkled with red dust, as an evidence of the sportive pleasantry of their inviters. If an officer is peculiarly strict, or feared by the natives at other times, they now take an innocent revenge, an instance of which I remember to have occurred a short time since. An unpopular officer, being as usual invited to the Sepoys Natch, which took place at a tent about a quarter of a mile from his bungalow, he walked down to the lines at the usual time, late in the evening.



The natives, it appeared, had concerted to plague him; for after being seated, and the usual wreath of mogree blossoms cast over his neck by the premiere danseuse of the evening, he soon found that the showers of red dust which assailed him, were momentarily becoming more and more stifling: accordingly, he watched his opportunity and rushed from the tent, rejoicing at so easy an escape, but alas! his triumph was of short duration; at every turn, handfuls of red powder from unseen enemies saluted his eyes and mouth, and unable to avoid scores of tormentors, lying perdue at their posts, he arrived suffocated and breathless at his house, his face and hair plastered with red powder, and his whole figure bearing evidence to the zeal of the attackers.

**(f) Hindu-Muslim tensions at Holi-Muharram, William Sleeman<sup>12</sup>**

The processions are liable to meet in the street, and the lees of the wine of the Hindoos, or the red powder which is substituted for them, is liable to fall upon the tombs of the others. Hindoos pass on, forgetting in their saturnalian joy all distinctions of age, sex, or religion, their clothes and persons besmeared with the red powder, which is moistened and thrown from all kinds of machines over friend and foe; while meeting these come the Muhammadans, clothed in their green mourning, with gloomy downcast looks, beating their breasts, ready to kill themselves, and too anxious for an excuse to kill anybody else. Let but one drop of the less of joy fall upon the image of the tomb as it passes, and a hundred swords fly from their scabbards; many an innocent person falls; and woe be to the town in which the magistrate is not at hand with his police and military force. Proudly conscious of their power, the magistrates refuse to prohibit one class from laughing because the other happens to be weeping; and the Hindoos on such occasions laugh the more heartily to let the world see that they are free to do so.

**6. Makar Shakranti at the camp of Daulat Rao Sindhia, T.D. Broughton<sup>13</sup>**

The Hindoos have also been celebrating a feast, called Sunkrat: when parcels of a small black seed, called *Til*, are sent in presents to those whom they wish to compliment. The Muha Raj sends them to the British resident, and to the principal Surdars in camp. Poor people carry about quantities of it, and present it to such as are rich enough to bestow a rupee or two in return. A rich banker gave a dinner upon this occasion to a number of Brahmuns, at which he exhibited a good specimen of Mahratta delicacy and management. A most plentiful meal was prepared; and when each guest had eaten as much as he could possibly contrive to swallow, he arose, and was presented with a new *dotee*, or cloth to wrap about the loins, a blanket, and a coarse linen jacket



quilted with cotton: he was then conducted to a small ruined fort in the neighbourhood of the camp, where he was locked in, to prevent his offering himself a second time, and appropriating an undue portion of the benefaction. In this confinement the guests were kept throughout the night; and on the following morning were all let out together, arrayed in their new habiliments. To feed Brahmuns is an act of religious duty, sedulously inculcated upon the minds of all Hindoos: and on such occasions the greater the quantity of victuals that is devoured by these holy men, the greater the merit and honour accruing to the entertainer. Brahmuns, after eating till they are ready to burst, will sometimes consent, at the earnest entreaty of their host, to cram down a little more; receiving for each successive mouthful an increasing number of rupees, till nature revolts at the oppressive load: and instances have not infrequently occurred of this being repeated, till the poor gorged wretch tempted by, perhaps, some hundred rupees, has forced another morsel into his mouth, and expired on the spot. In this case no kind of blame attaches to the feeder; while the fed goes straight to heaven, *ex officio*.

#### 7(a) Basant, T.D. Broughton<sup>14</sup>

This is the season of the Busunt, or spring of the Hindoos. The word signifies joy: and at this time all are accordingly joyful and happy. They present little bunches of green corn or flowers to their friends, and wear them in their turbans, which they dye yellow, as being the gayest of all colours: many dress themselves in full suits of yellow; songs and music are heard in all quarters: and every one feeds Brahmuns and distributes alms according to his means. The general gladness diffuses itself even among the poor women who grind the corn, and who now always lighten their labour by a song. The whole of the corn consumed in camp is ground by women: who for this purpose use a very simple mill, consisting of two flat circular stones about fifteen inches in diameter; the upper one of which is turned by a handle upon a pivot fixed in the lower one. The woman sits on the ground with the mill, which is called a *chukkee*, before her; and if she works hard, may grind from forty to fifty seers of corn in the day. Servants and others of the poorer sort, who have their wives in camp, earn something in addition to their wages, by employing them in this manner at their hours of leisure. An industrious woman, when not inclined to sleep, will arise at any hour of the night and busy herself with the mill: and any person lying awake, would be sure to hear two or three women so employed, singing over their work in a strain which, if not positively beautiful, is far from being unpleasing, and accords well with the stillness of the hour. Some of these songs, those especially which allude to the Busunt, possess no inconsiderable share of merit.



**(b) Basant celebration with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Baron Hugel<sup>15</sup>**

Saturday, January 23 – The Basant, literally the spring, is a festival celebrated yearly at this season in Upper Hindustan and the Panjab, the *Sirsya* then covering the whole face of the country with its blossoms. This is the first sign of the opening of the year, as the snowdrop is with us. On this day the Maha Raja betakes himself to a small building not far from the Shalimar, and the whole population of Lahor have orders to show themselves on the road to it. I never saw a more singular-looking assemblage. The Sikhs are the only Hindus of the plain always ready for amusement, and the people of Lahor are especially known for this disposition. I took this road at twelve o'clock, with Khalifa Sahib and Vigne; and as we went on remarked them in succession, some collected in groups, others idly loitering among the ruins, and many moving along on camels, oxen, horses, or elephants, according to their means. On the camels, which were dressed out with collars of shells and little bells, mingled with larger tassels, formed of party-coloured wools, and the tails of the Tibet cow, sat three or four men; while from eight to twelve persons were seated in the Munjil, Amari, or Howdah on the elephant's backs. Nor were the palankeens less numerous, or less strange in shape and colour. Large crowds had formed round a talking or singing fakir; a juggler or an astrologer; a vendor of toys or sweetmeats. At another spot, grown-up men were running about the fields with kites, and multitudes of persons were seen following some musicians who were beating their tamtams, and blowing horns. About half way along, at the balcony of a first story, sat a Sikh Guru...and not a Sikh passed him without his "Salam, Maha Raja," while some bestowed on him a few rupees. All was bustle and mirth, and in every direction we heard the Sikh greetings, "Wah! Guruji-ke fatih!" Hail to the conquering Guru!

The horsemen attending on me were all in light yellow, as well as the whole court: this being the colour of the spring in the Panjab. We missed our way at one time and got entangled among the ruins, whence we had so much trouble in recovering the direct path, that the Maha Raja was kept waiting some time for us. On the last mile, three regiments, dressed in yellow, were drawn up like a close fence on both sides. In Europe, this change of uniform would cost a large sum of money, but here the expense is trifling; the white linen is coloured with saffron for the day, and then washed again. The unsightly building where Ranjit Singh held the Basant stood at the end of a close alley. "And why here?" I inquired. "Because it is the will of the Maha Raja," said the astonished Fakir Sahib. Before it, in two lines stood thirty elephants, so close to one another, that in order to gain the entrance we were obliged to squeeze in under their trunks, or just before them; but they were so tame and gentle, that there was not the least danger in this. The elephant is a very social



animal, and behaves himself in company whether with his equals or with men, with the greatest discretion. It is to be supposed that the Sirdar Hati was among them. We crowded in through a narrow doorway into the interior, for the greatest freedom reigns during the feasts and ceremonies in India, and the people were all pressing forward together. One part of the court was divided from the rest by a kanat, or canvass screen, and there sat Ranjit Singh in an arm-chair under a large tent of Kashmir stuff, yellow like carpet, himself, and every thing about it. It gave him a look of additional ugliness. Large quantities of the Sirsya, and other yellow flowers were scattered about here and there. Vigne and I were the only persons in dark clothes, Mohan being in yellow, according to the prevailing fashion. Here I saw Karak Sing, the Maha Raja's eldest son, whose exterior promises very little. I was presented to him, but could hardly find time to speak a word, for the Basant began as soon as we had taken our seats, and I found that it was in reality a levee, each person being expected, as at every opportunity here, to offer some present to the Maha Raja.

#### 8. Janamashtmi at the Maratha camp, T.D. Broughton<sup>16</sup>

The *Junum-ushtoomee* took place at twelve o'clock on the night of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, when the image of the infant Krishna was placed in the *Phool Dhol*, a kind of swinging cradle, and the important event announced by the sounding drums and concas, and the firing of cannon. There often happens a schism among the Pundits as to the proper time for keeping this festival, one party asserting that it should be determined by the recurrence of the *Ushtoomee*, or eighth days, of the month *Bhadon*, the other, averring it to depend upon the ascendancy of the star *Rohunee*; both these data having occurred at the birth of Krishna. The *Bueshnoos*, or followers of Bishn, are guided by the star, which always appears in a certain position on the eighth, or on the preceding or succeeding day, while their opponents regard only the day of the month. On the third the great tent was consecrated by a *Pooja*, or worshipping, at which the Muha Raj was present. In the evening the customary dances commenced, and all the Surdars were summoned to attend. A thousand rupees were also distributed among the Brahmuns. On the following evening we paid our usual visit on this occasion. The tent in which we were received was about one hundred and fifty feet long, divided lengthwise into three compartments, by a double row of posts ornamented with coloured paper, and to each of which was affixed a sconce of candles. At the further end was a stage, raised about two feet from the ground, and made to represent a kind of gothic hall, with pillars and arches highly painted and gilded. This is called the *Sungasun*, or throne, and in the center of it was placed the *Phool*



*Dhol*, covered with profusion of pearls and jewels, and wreaths of flowers fancifully disposed, in which lay the image of *Bal Govind*, the name by which Krishna was distinguished in his early infancy, and which literally signifies "the happy infant." A number of Pundits and attendant Brahmuns sat about it, and were employed in rocking the cradle and fanning the little idol within. The center space of the tent was left open for the dancers, and those on either side filled up to the level of the stage, and appropriated to the accommodation of the Muha Raj and the numerous spectators assembled on the occasion. Among these, when the candles were lighted, we perceived, to our utter astonishment, the fat *Purhumhuns*... appeared upon the line of march. He sat immediately opposite to the Muha Raj, of whom, however, or of any one else, he took not the slightest notice. The attendants who sat about Seendhiya, did not seem much to like the distinguished post which this man of mortified passions had taken up, and Atmaram made a kind of apology for his appearance, by saying, that as it was religious spectacle, it would not be proper to exclude a devotee from being present at it. He strenuously denied, however, the man's pretensions to the title of *Purhumhuns*, asserting, that if he were really so refined a being, he would neither be so fat, nor have exhibited himself in such a place. After one or two sets of common Nach girls had performed, the *Rahusd,harees*, who were seated at the upper end of the tent on a kind of raised sofa surrounded by *Chobdars*, *Chuonree-burdars*, and a crowd of other attendants, came forward. They are boys, always Brahmuns, who are educated at Muttra for this purpose, where a large tract of land is appropriated for their support. Parties of them travel about at this season, to perform at the different Hindoo courts of India; that now in camp consists of four, besides the musicians, and are all eminently handsome. The eldest represented the young Kunya, the name by which Krishna was distinguished in his boyish days; the youngest, his beloved Rhada, and the other two her youthful companions. The performance was a kind of Ballet, descriptive of the sports of this amorous and inconstant, but interesting deity, with the *Copees*, or virgins of Gokul, during which they sung stanzas in the *B,hak,ha*, or language of *Brij*, the name by which the country, for a certain distance around Muttra, was formerly designated, and which was the scene of the early exploits of Krishna. This language, which is very little known among Europeans in general, is forcible and comprehensive, though, from abounding in monosyllables, it sounds harsh to ears unaccustomed to hear it pronounced. It contains beautiful specimens of the ancient Hindoo poets, which, I am persuaded, would amply compensate the trouble of any one who should apply himself to their study...

Both the dancing and singing of the *Rahusd,harees* was far superior to



that of common performers; their attitudes were exceedingly graceful, and their voices were never raised beyond the natural pitch. The dresses were appropriate and elegant, especially that of Kunya, who wore a brilliant sun upon his head, and a quantity of superb jewels about his neck and breast; all of which, as well as the dresses of the other boys, were furnished from the wardrobe of the Muha Raj. After the dances were over, they exhibited in groups representations of the most celebrated statues of Krishna and his relatives, with an accuracy and steadiness quite surprising in such children. The instrumental performers who accompany the *Rahus-d,harees* are, as well as the boys themselves, all Brahmuns; and it was pleasing to see them, after the performance, instead of making the usual obeisance, lifting up their little hands, as invoking a blessing upon the Muha Raj, who rose, and bowed to each as he retired. We quitted the tent soon after, highly gratified by the entertainment of the evening.

The festival of the *Junum-ushtoomee* lasts six days, and is, upon the whole, the most classical and pleasing of the Hindoo calendar. Various rites and ceremonies take place at stated periods of the infant's growth, allusive to events which occurred at those times, till the sixth day, when the *Takoor* (that word, as with us, being equally applied to a spiritual as a temporal lord) is removed from the cradle in which it had lain. An earthen pot, filled with sour curds tinged with turmeric, is then hoisted upon a long pole, from whence it is dropped at a signal made by the Pundits; and the by-standers besmear each other with the mud, and throw about a quantity of the mixture, which each had brought with him for the purpose, in the same manner as at the Hohlee: a part of the ceremony which was announced by salutes of cannon in the Muha Raj's camp. The whole concludes with a dinner given by the Pundits; the only occasion, I believe, on which these holy men ever incur such an expense.

### 9. Barat ceremony for Mahadev, William Moorcroft<sup>17</sup>

Upon my march from Srinagar I had observed preparations making for the performance of the ceremony called Barat, the hero of which I learned lived at Tiri. On my arrival at that place I sent for him, and was visited by a man of about sixty years of age, named Banchu, accompanied by his two sons, one about thirty, the other about fifteen, both his pupils. Barat is sliding down a rope fastened at one end to a tree or post on some elevated point, and carried obliquely to some fixed object below, to which it is attached. It is intended as a propitiatory rite to Mahadeva, and is performed to avert some impending evil, or to procure the removal of any actual calamity. It was, accordingly, performed by Banchu when the cholera was raging at Almora, and was supposed to have obtained that immunity from the disease which this part of the country actually enjoyed. Banchu brought me the articles employed



on these occasions: a rope made of grass, about three inches in diameter, a wooden saddle, and two short sticks. The length of the rope used in his last descent was twelve hundred cubits. The saddle is something like a shallow and short pack-saddle, without pads, and with a very sharp ridge. The ridge was a foot and four inches long, the sides or flaps were eight inches deep, spreading outwards, so that the breadth at the bottom was three inches and a quarter. The saddle was scooped out internally nearly to the ridge to let in the rope, which fitted it exactly. The sticks are fastened transversely from flap to flap, so as to give support to the thighs. The performer, bestriding the saddle, throws his body as far back as possible, and descends the rope rapidly by the effect of his own weight, aided by heavy stones fastened to his legs. Persons are stationed underneath with transverse cords to endeavour to catch him should he fall, and others stationed at the foot of the rope seize him and carry him some way forward, so as gradually to diminish the momentum of his descent. The performer is nearly senseless when he reaches the ground, and is some time before he recovers; a collection is made for his benefit, and he derives no slender credit from his patriotic devotion. There does not seem to be much danger in the operation when there is adequate dexterity in the performer, as Banchu had achieved the feat sixteen times without encountering any serious mishap.

#### **10. Conflict between Deotas and Dains in the Gogar Mountain, William Moorcroft<sup>18</sup>**

The mountain of Gogar is famous for a fierce conflict which is said to take place in it annually, beginning on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Bhadon (August – September), between the Deotas or wizards, and Dains or witches, who assemble from far and near, even from Bengal and the Dekhin.

#### **11. The festival of Adi Brahma at Kullu, Mr. Trebeck who accompanied William Moorcroft in his travels<sup>19</sup>**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> we entered Kulu. On our road, at a place called Tiri, a number of people were celebrating the festival of a deity, Adi Brahma. The god was personated by a villager seated on a high-backed chair, with a pole on each side for carrying it. It was covered with some dirty striped silk, and in the back were eight heads or masks made of metal, silvered and gilt. Tufts of barley grass and peacocks' feathers were stuck about the chair, and every peasant wore a bunch of young barley in his cap. The man who acted the god affected the reply prophetically to questions that were put to him by the bystanders, and seemed frequently to afford them much merriment. Amongst other things, he foretold a fierce war at hand.



**12. Ram lila at Allahabad, Fanny Parkes<sup>20</sup>**

October 1829 – We drove to the Parade-ground, to view the celebration of the Ram Leela festival. Ram the warrior god is particularly revered by the *sipahis*. An annual *tamasha* is held in his honour, and that of Seeta his consort. A figure of Ravana the giant, as large as a windmill, was erected on the Parade-ground: the interior of the monster was filled with fireworks. This giant was destroyed by Ram. All sorts of games are played by the *sipahis*, on the Parade. Mock fights and wrestling matches take place, and fireworks are let off. Two young natives, about ten or twelve years old, are often attired to represent Ram and Seeta; and men with long tails figure as the army of monkeys, headed by their leader Hanuman.

...One ceremony was very remarkable: each native regiment took out its colours and made *pooja* to the standards, offering them sweetmeats, flowers, rice and *pan*, as they do to a god! At Cawnpore. I saw the men of the third cavalry riding round the image of the giant, with their colours flying, after having made *pooja* to them.

At the conclusion of the *tamasha*, the figure of Ravana is blown up by the conqueror, Ram.

**13. Sikh parade at Dussehra, Victor Jacquemont<sup>21</sup>**

The Dasehra is a Hindu festival, the greatest of them all. The Sikhs celebrate it with even more noise and brilliance than their Hindu ancestors and brethren do. It is the day on which Ranjit reviews his whole army. In my capacity as a temporary diplomat I went and sat with Wade near the King in a magnificent tent erected on a platform in the middle of the plain of Amritsar. All the noblemen of the Sikh court came to do homage to the King, after which the army filed past before us. It was very like the armies described by the historians and poets of antiquity. This time the reality enormously surpassed my expectation.

**14. Diwali at Banaras: 'A scene of fairy splendour,' Emma Roberts<sup>22</sup>**

In no part of Hindostan can one of the most beautiful of the native festivals be seen to so great an advantage as at Benares. The *duwallie* is celebrated there with the greatest splendour, and its magnificence is heightened by the situation of the city on the bank of the river, and the singular outlines of the buildings. The attraction of this annual festival consists in the illuminations at the close of the evening, small *chiraugs* (earthen lamps), fed with oil which produces a brilliant white light, are placed as closely together as possible, on every ledge of every building. Palace, temple, and tower seemed formed of stars. The city appears like the creation of the fire-king, the view from the



water affording the most superb and romantic spectacle imaginable – a scene of fairy splendour, far too brilliant for description. Europeans embark in boats to enjoy the gorgeous pageant from the river; all the vessels are lighted up, and the buildings in the distance, covered with innumerable lamps, shine out in radiant beauty. European illuminations, with their coloured lamps, their transparencies, their crowns, stars, and initial letters, appear paltry when compared to the chaste grandeur of the Indian mode; the outlines of a whole city are marked in streams of fire, and the corruscations of light shoot up into the dark blue sky above, and tremble in long undulations on the rippling waves below.

### **15. 'Abominable superstitions,' Mary Martha Sherwood<sup>23</sup>**

...as regards the higher authorities, I am ashamed to say that almost, I fear, down to the present time, encouragement is afforded to the most abominable superstitions of the heathens. It is still a matter of grievance and complaint to the religious persons holding situations under Government, in the Madras Presidency, that many of them, both civil and military, are required to attend heathen and Mahometan religious festivals, with the view of showing them respect; that in some instances they are called upon to do homage to idols; that the management and regulation of the revenues of some pagodas and mosques are so vested in the hands of the officers of Government that not the least expense can be incurred, or any of the vile functionaries of the hateful system be remunerated, without the official concurrence of the Christian trustee. Nor are these all the complaints which may be truly and fairly made against that heartless and unprincipled liberality by which the higher authorities of our country manifest their disregard of the religion of the Bible.

## **B. SCENES FROM FAIRS**

### **1. Fair at Allahabad, Fanny Parkes<sup>24</sup>**

JANUARY 1833 – The *bura mela* at Prag, or the great fair at Allahabad, is held annually on the sands of the Ganges below the ramparts of the Fort, extending from the Mahratta Bund to the extreme point of the sacred junction of the rivers. The booths extend the whole distance, composed of mud walls, covered with mats or thatched. This fair lasts about two months, and attracts merchants from all parts of India, Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow, Jaipur, etc. Very good diamonds, pearls, coral, shawls, cloth, woollens, china, furs, etc., are to be purchased. Numerous booths display brass and copper vessels, glittering in the sun with many brazen idols: others are filled with Benares' toys for



children. Bows and arrows are displayed, also native caps made of sable, the crowns of which are of the richest gold and silver embroidery.

The pearl merchants offer long strings of large pearls for sale, amongst which some few are fine, round and of a good colour. The natives value size, but are not very particular as to colour, they do not care to have them perfectly round and do not object to an uneven surface. They will allow a purchaser to select the best at pleasure from long strings.

The deep red coral is valued by the natives much more than the pink. I bought some very fine pink coral at the fair: the beads were immense; the price of the largest, Rs 11 per *tola*; i.e., Rs 11 for a rupee's weight of coral. The smallest, Rs 6-4 per *tola*; it was remarkably fine. Some years afterwards the Brijai Bai, a Mahratta lady, a friend of mine, called on me; she observed the long string of fine pink coral around my neck and said, 'I am astonished a memsahib should wear coral; we only decorate our horses with it: that is pink coral, the colour is not good; look at my horse.' I went to the verandah; her horse was adorned with a necklace of fine deep red coral. She was quite right and I made over mine to my grey steed.

Some of the prettiest things sold at the *mela* are the *tikas*, an ornament for the forehead for native women. The *tika* is of different sizes and patterns; in gold or silver for the wealthy, tinsel for the poorer classes; and of various shapes. The prettiest are of silver, a little hollow cup like a dewdrop cut in halves: the ornament is stuck with an adhesive mixture on the forehead, just in the centre between the eyebrows. Some *tikas* are larger, resembling the *ferroniere* worn by Europeans ladies.

The Allahabad *hakaks* are famous for their imitation in glass of precious stones. I purchased a number of native ornaments in imitation of the jewellery worn by native ladies, which were remarkably well made and cost only a few rupees. I also bought strings of mock pearls brought from China that are scarcely to be distinguished from real pearls, either in colour or weight.

The toys the rich natives give their children, consisting in imitations of all sorts of animals, are remarkably pretty; they are made in silver and enamelled: others are made of ivory very beautifully carved; and for the poorer classes they are of pewter, moulded into the most marvellous shapes.

### Religious mendicants

At this time of the year *lakhs* and *lakhs* of natives come to bathe at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna; they unite at the extremity of a neck of land, or rather sand, that runs out just below the Fort. On this holy spot the Brahmans and religious mendicants assemble in thousands....

The most remarkable people at this *mela* are the religious mendicants;



they assemble by hundreds and live within enclosures fenced off by sticks, a little distance from the booths. These people are the monks of the East; there are two orders of them; the Gosains, or followers of Shiva, and the Byragies, disciples of Vishnu. Any Mohammedan may become a *fakir*; and a Hindu of any caste a religious mendicant. The ashes of cow-dung are considered purifying: these people are often rubbed over from head to foot with an ashen mixture and have a strange dirty white, or rather blue appearance. Ganges mud, cow-dung, and ashes of cow-dung form, I believe, the delectable mixture.

The sectarial marks or symbols are painted on their faces according to their caste, with a red, yellow, white or brown pigment, also on their breasts and arms. Their only covering is a bit of rag passed between the legs and tied round the waist by a cord or rope...

Acts of severity towards the body, practised by religious mendicants, are not done as penances for sin but as works of extraordinary merit, promising large rewards in a future state. The Byragee is not a penitent, but a proud ascetic. These people bear the character of being thieves and rascals...

*January 11th* – Some natives are at the door with the most beautiful snakes, two of them very large and striped like tigers; the men carry them twisted round their bodies and also round their necks, as a young lady wears a boa; the effect is good. The two tiger-striped ones were greatly admired as a well-matched pair; they are not venomous...

The *mela* is very full; such beautiful dresses of real sable as I have seen today brought down by the Moguls for sale! Lined with shawl, they would make magnificent dressing-gowns. I have bought a Persian writing-case and a book beautifully illuminated and written in Persian and Arabic: the Moguls beguile me of my rupees....

*January 21st* – This being a great Hindu holiday and bathing day induced me to pay another visit to the fair. Amongst the sport (*tamasha*) at the *mela*, was a Hindu beggar who was *sitting upon thorns*, up to his waist in water – an agreeable amusement. One man played with his right hand on a curious instrument, called a *been*, while in his left hand he held two pieces of black stone, about the length and thickness of a finger which he jarred together in the most dexterous manner, producing an effect something like castanets, singing at the same time. The passers-by threw cowries, *paisa* (copper coins) and rice to the man.

I purchased two musical instruments called *sarinda*, generally used by the *fakirs*, most curious things; Hindu ornaments, idols, china and some white marble images from Jaipur...



### Missionaries at the mela

On platforms raised of mud and sand, some ten or twelve missionaries were preaching; every man had his platform to himself and a crowd of natives surrounded each orator. Seeing one of my own servants, an Hindu, apparently an attentive listener, I asked the man what he had heard. 'How call I tell?' said he; 'the English padre is talking.' I explained to him the subject of the discourse, and received for answer, 'Very well; it is their business to preach, they get *paisa* for so doing; what more is to be said?'

## 2. Kite fair at Allahabad, Fanny Parkes<sup>25</sup>

The Sohobut Mela, or Fair of Kites, was in Alopee Bagh; I went to see it; hundreds of people, in their gayest dresses, were flying kites in all directions, so happily and eagerly; and under the fine trees in the mango *tope*, sweetmeats, toys and children's ornaments were displayed in booths erected for the purpose. It was a pretty sight, that Alopee ke Mela.

The kites are of different shapes, principally square, and have no tails; the strings are covered with *manjha*, a paste mixed with pounded glass and applied to the string to enable it to cut that of another by friction. One man flies his kite against another, and he is the loser whose string it cut. The boys and the men also, race after the defeated kite, which becomes the prize of the person who first seizes it. It requires some skill to gain the victory; the men are as fond of the sport as the boys.

## 3. Horse fair at Haridwar, C.J.C. Davidson<sup>26</sup>

From Hurdwar towards Khunkhul, and thence to Hurdwar, for a mile on each side, with an average breadth of four hundred yards, is occupied with perhaps ten thousand horses and nearly half a million of people. I am not aware that any census has ever been taken, and nothing is more difficult than to give a correct guess of a large widely-scattered mob. In every twelve years the number increases to nearly a million, and the fair is then called the *coom*. It is even now a living swarm of cows, horses, bullocks, camels, elephants, tattoos or ponies, and mules from Osbeck Tartary, to Benares, and pilgrims are found from Calcutta.

The scene in the highest degree interesting and diverting. The horse merchants from Bokhara and Cabool occupy the stony central parts of the dry bed of the river, with their powerful and handsome, but generally old and blemished horses; while those from Toorkistan squat in the small compounds behind the houses of Hurdwar, separated from each other by dry stone walls. These men bring what are well known in India by their great power, and are chiefly galloways and ponies, called Toorkies; their prices from 250 to as high



as 800 rupees, according to their shapes, colours, and paces. They have all been previously taught to amble, a pace thoroughly unpleasant to most Englishmen, but delightful to all black men... The Seiks bring only a few barren mares and mules...

Amongst the horse-dealers some capitalists bring a few select Persian horses, which they keep warmly clothed in a most handsome manner, under spacious tents, which on inquiry will be found valued at from five to fifty thousand rupees; but which are (if sold at all,) sold for eight hundred to one thousand rupees. The greatest attention is paid by a native horse dealer in fattening his horse, till he resembles a stall-fed bullock; which is accomplished by cramming him with cordial stimulants, such as pounded ginger and sugar, or cardamoms and treacle, with his boiled vetches; a man stands on each side of the horse stuffing large balls of the composition down his throat.

When the horse is under examination, the dealer continually laments the great loss of flesh which he has sustained by his long march to the fair, which he illustrates by putting his fingers edgeways over the ribs; but when the animal is cantered for one hundred yards, it will be found blown in a minute, and it is quite painful to hear the pury beast struggling for breath. I saw one grey pony from Tartary, which, from excessive obesity, resembled a cart-horse cut down at the knees; for which they had the impudence to ask eleven hundred rupees. This animal was probably purchased for one hundred rupees, and might have cost as much more in fattening. While none can exceed the unwearying and polite attention of the other horse merchants, these men are occasionally very rude to Europeans, and will not uncover their lamberts till they ascertain your means of purchasing...

The natives who supply the horse-dealers with grass, (half of which is dried up, and half green,) are a race of spurious hill people, who call themselves Bramins and Chuttees. They are strikingly unlike the dwellers in the plains, being generally broad and lean, low and muscular. In their personal habits they are amazingly filthy. In summer and winter they wear a coarse blanket frock, which, however incredible it may appear, is never removed from their skins. But even out of this evil springs good; for this is the foundation of their personal chronology; they do not say, I am twenty or thirty years old, but I have worn so many jackets! It is strictly true that the jackets are allowed to drop off from filth and rottenness.

Amongst the greatest curiosities, were perhaps half a dozen remarkably powerful ponies, from Osbeck Tartary, called "phooldars" – anglice, "flower-marked." They were under thirteen hands high, and of the most curious compound colours or marks that can be imagined. A description can hardly be given, but it may be attempted. Suppose in the first place that the animal is a



pure snowy white; cover the white with large irregular light bay spots, through which the white is visible; in the middle of these light bay, let there be dark bay marbled spots: at every six or eight inches, plant rhomboidal patches of a very dark iron grey: then sprinkle the whole with dark fleabites. There is a phooldar! If I had but one of these at Bartlemy fair, I would retire with an unquestionable fortune of half crowns and shilling in less than fourteen months.

Runjeet Singh levies a duty of fifty rupees on every horse that passes through his territory to ours. Mares of the phooldar breed I have never seen: some of those in the fair were geldings. A friend of mine, in whose hospitable tent I passed my days, was employed in purchasing horses for the service, and thus I enjoyed many amusing conversations with the Moghul or Affghan horse dealers. It seemed to puzzle them much why the English did not invade Runjeet Singh's territories. They abhor the Seiks, because they are gradually seizing the Affghan dependencies.

## C. JUGGLERS, ETC

### 1. Jugglers, Eliza Fay<sup>27</sup>

I must now assure you that I have actually seen with my own eyes several of those things which we girls used to think poor Captain S – took travellers' liberty in relating, such as dancing snakes, jugglers swallowing swords, etc.... When you have seen a man thrust a sword down his throat, and are fully convinced that there is no deception, you feel that you have beheld a wonder, and there the gratification ends, for the sight is unnatural and disgusting. With some other tricks of the juggler I was, however, much pleased. He had a manner of throwing four brass balls up and catching them with such amazing rapidity that they perpetually encircled his head, forming a kind of hat around it. He likewise threaded small beads with his tongue, and performed a number of very curious sleights of hand.

### 2. Bhanmittees, T.D. Broughton<sup>28</sup>

A set of jugglers, called *Bhanmittees*, came into our camp this morning, and exhibited some surprising feats of activity. One woman in particular astonished me: she rested on her head and feet, with her back toward the earth; two swords, with their blades inwards, were crossed upon her chin, and two others, the blades also inwards, under her neck: she then traversed round in a circle, with great rapidity; keeping her head always fixed in the center and leaping over the points of the swords, whenever her breast chanced to be downwards. The *Bhanmittees* are of the lowest classes of the people; and



support themselves by travelling about, and exhibiting their feats in the towns and villages through which they pass.

### **3. Rope dancer at Furrah, Bishop Heber<sup>29</sup>**

Soon after we had encamped, a numerous party of Fakirs, and other similar vagabonds, like us, as it seemed, on their travells, appeared, and pitched their tents at a little distance...A party of them, however, came forwards with a musician, and a boy dressed up in adjutant's feathers, with a bill of the same bird fastened to his head, asked leave to shew off some tricks in tumbling and rope-dancing. On my assenting, in less time that I could have supposed possible, four very long bamboos were fixed in the ground, and a slack-rope suspended between them, on which the boy, throwing off his bird's dress, and taking a large balancing-pole in his hand, began to exhibit a series of tricks which proved him to be a funambulist of considerable merit. He was a little and very thin animal, but broad-shouldered and well made, and evidently possessed of no common share of strength as well as of agility and steadiness. Mean time, while he was gamboling above, the musician below, who was an old man, and whose real or assumed name was Hajee Baba, went through all the usual jests and contortions of our English "Mr. Merryman," sometimes affecting great terror at his companion's feats and the consequence of his falling, – sometimes bidding him, "Salam to the Sahib Log," or challenging him to still greater feats of agility and dexterity.

### **4. The Nut Log, Fanny Parkes<sup>30</sup>**

April 19<sup>th</sup> – Yesterday, some wandering gypsies (Nut Log) came to the door; they were a family of tumblers. Nut is the name of a tribe who are generally jugglers, rope-dancers, etc. There was one girl amongst them whose figure was most beautiful and her attitudes more classic and elegant than any I have ever beheld; Madame Sacci would hide her diminished head before the supple and graceful attitudes of this Indian girl.

A man placed a solid piece of wood, of the shape of an hourglass and about eighteen inches in height, on his head; the girl ran up his back and, standing on one foot on the top of the wood, maintained her balance in the most beautiful attitude whilst the man ran round and round in a small circle; she then sprang off his head to the ground. After this she again ran up his back and kneeling on the hour-glass-like wood on his head, allowed him to run in the circle; then she balanced herself on the small of her back, her hands and feet in the air. After that, she stood on her head, her feet straight in the air, the man performing the circle all the time! The drapery worn by the natives falls in the most beautiful folds and the girl was a fit subject for a statuary: I was delighted.



They placed a brass vessel, with dust in it, behind her back on the ground, whilst she stood erect; she bent backwards, until her forehead touched the dust in the vessel, and took up between her eyelids two bits of iron that looked like bodkins; the brass pan in which they were laid was only about two inches high from the ground! She threw herself into wonderful attitudes with a sword in her hand. A set of drawings illustrating all the graceful positions which she assumed would be very interesting; I had never seen any thing of the kind before, and thought of *Wilhelm Meister*. The Nut Log consisted of five women, one little child and one man, who performed all these extraordinary feats; another man beat a tom-tom to keep time for them and accompanied it with his voice; the poor little child performed wonderfully well. She could not have been more than six years old; the other girl was, I should suppose, about eighteen years of age.

### 5. Puppet plays, Edward Braddon<sup>31</sup>

More amusing than Indian conjuring or the nautch is the *kutpootli* or puppet-play, that in Northern India is the especial treat of European children, and the frequent joy of the adult native. It is true that comedy played by the *Kutpootli* dolls is mainly a procession of rajahs, who enter two and two (after the manner of Noah's beasts), and range themselves silent and motionless in durbar; but there is an undercurrent of farce which gives some life to the affair, and much delight to British children. A wayfarer is robbed by a thief and bullied by a policeman; a sweeper and his wife are prominent upon the scene in the prologue, and as comic as circumstances will permit; and although the farce of these minor characters had for me no particular meaning, it is quite possible that the initiated saw in it something of a distinctly edifying and satirical character.

Sometimes this oriental Punch and Judy travesty was elaborated for older audiences by the addition of a ludicrous caricature of the Anglo-Indian. This uncomplimentary rendering of the white man's peculiarities was given, not by dolls, but by the men attached to the show. Dressed in odds and ends of cast-off European clothing, and wearing masks designed to represent the European countenance, these dismal mimes presented their view of the average Briton's demeanour. As far as I can remember, the Britannic character thus portrayed was singularly circumscribed. The sahib in mask and scarecrow apparel was a creature of three emotions and no moral. He got drunk, he said d - n frequently, and he thumped his native attendant.

### 6. The snake-charmer, T.G. Fraser<sup>32</sup>

Near my friend T's house, in the fort of Asirgarh, to which we returned for a few days, were several small out-houses in which his dogs and poultry were kept. He had some very handsome and valuable English dogs; one of



these was found dead one morning and brought out for inspection, and as he had been in good health and spirits the evening previous, his sudden death, as well as that of some game fowls in the room adjoining, was unaccountable. We closely examined their dormitories, but could discover nothing suspicious, but some rat-holes in the chunam of the floor; one of the fowls, however, on being denuded of his feathers, exhibited such unmistakable marks of having succumbed to snake bite, that a snake charmer from the city of Burhanpur was sent for, and soon made his appearance.

The man had with him the usual equipment of a basket and flageolet made, apparently, from a long thin gourd; for clothes he had the common waist-cloth round his loins, and a scanty rag across his shoulders. My friend commenced by having him searched, and when assured he had nothing about him but what nature gave, he was told what had occurred, and taken to the rooms that had proved so fatal. Before commencing work, however, the charmer stipulated that any snake or cobra that he might capture should not be killed. As all of us were aware that the snake represents an incarnation of the Hindu deity, this was agreed to, and accordingly, before us all and under close surveillance, the man entered one of the rooms with nothing but his pipe and a waist-cloth. He examined the rat-holes, and selecting one he commenced piping a reedy monotonous treble for some five or six minutes, when a cobra's head slowly emerged from the hole. With a forked stick he at once pinned the snake to the ground, and seizing it with the other hand behind the head, drew him gently out of the hole.

This we saw him do as distinctly as sharp eyes within six feet of the operation could assure us. He then went to two other of the small rooms, repeating his first performance. On one he was unsuccessful, or it had no occupant; from the other he drew another but a smaller cobra, which he slipped, as before into his basket outside. We all now proceeded to the front of the house, and two chickens being brought, the man commenced again playing before the closed basket containing the snakes, and then, slowly lifting off the lid partially, he presented one of the birds at the opening, which was immediately struck by one of the snakes, and released immediately. In three minutes the fowl, after running about freely, began to stagger, then run round, and fell and died within five minutes, for it was timed, watch in hand. If anything that one actually sees is convincing of a fact, this surely ought to have assured us that the man had actually enticed unsophisticated snakes from their retreat; and none of those who witnessed the feat entertained, I believe, a doubt on the subject. The doctor, moreover, 'to make assurance doubly sure,' had one of the snake's jaws opened, and we saw distinctly the two fangs, one on each side of the upper jaw.



## **State of Economy**

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- A. Agriculture**
- B. Some non-agricultural occupations**
- C. Manufactures**
- D. Skills of workforce**
- E. Bazaars**
- F. Trade and commerce**

### **A. AGRICULTURE**

#### **1. Effect of climate, Robert Orme<sup>1</sup>**

Effect of the climate of Indostan seems to counteract, in favour of the human race, the violences to which it is subject from the nature of the government.

1. The sun forbids the use of fuel, and renders the want of raiment to be scarcely an inconvenience. 2. The bare earth, with the slightest hut over it, affords a repose without the danger of diseases to a people vastly temperate. 3. Productions peculiar to the soil of India exceedingly contribute to the ease of various labours: a convenient house may be built in three days, with no other materials than what are furnished by the bamboo and kajan: a boat, with all its appurtenances, may be made from the single coconut tree; which at the same time supplies oil, and a nourishment in much request; the ease of producing and manufacturing cotton is evinced by the plenty and price of linen. 4. Health is best preserved in this climate, by the slightest and simplest diet: perhaps it is from this consideration that religion has forbid the use of flesh meats and spirituous liquors amongst the Gentoos.

Thus the general wants of other climates become extremely lessened in this. Now if men multiply in proportion to the ease of gaining a subsistence, it will no longer be admired that the kingdom of Indostan should, even under



the iron sway of despotism, continue populous; especially if we add this better fundamental cause, which, resulting like the other from the effects of the climate, is still rendered more effectual by the most sacred of customs.

## **2. Bengal most fertile in the universe, Robert Orme<sup>2</sup>**

The province of Bengal is the most fertile of any in the universe, more so than Egypt, and with greater certainty. A stratum of the richest mould upon a bottom of sand, the equal level of the country, and not a stone to be picked up in the space of some hundred miles, whilst shells are found every where. Such signs declare the soil to have been formed by the retreat of the sea; and in such a soil excessive rains falling at particular periods, cannot but render the cultivation of it to be scarce a labour.

The country about Dacca, where the Ganges disembogues itself by a hundred mouths into the ocean, is alone sufficient to supply the whole province of Bengal with rice: and every other part of the province, if duly cultivated, would produce exceedingly more than its occasions.

## **3. Bengal "uncommonly fruitful," De Grandpre<sup>3</sup>**

In the number of the former is salt-petre, with which the land of this country is strongly impregnated. This does not require repeated washing to yield any quantity; a single operation is sufficient to obtain as much as the Indians want. Their laziness could not endure the frequent repetitions of that process which are necessary in Europe. Cotton is another production of the soil, from which those fine muslins are made which are brought to Europe.

Wheat is very sparingly cultivated here, but the country abounds in rice, which constitutes the principal nourishment of the people: the ground is uncommonly fruitful; there is no such thing known as a bad crop. As the country is low and flat, it is intersected and watered by a multitude of canals, which are supplied by the Ganges, and contribute greatly to the fertility of the soil. This river overflows in the higher countries, and leaves, like the Nile, a sediment behind it, which the heat of the sun modifies and renders very productive. Bengal is the granary of rice to all India...

### **Introduction of sugarcane**

The English have introduced into this province a new species of agriculture, in the cultivation of the sugarcane. When I left Bengal in 1794, this undertaking had just begun to be tried, and it already afforded a fair prospect of success. Messrs. Lambert and Ross were the first who engaged in the speculation. I visited their plantation, and had the pleasure of seeing that their fields looked well, were in good order, and the canes promising, though smaller than those of the Antilles; this disadvantage however is compensated by the



quantity of juice they yield, which is owing to the peculiar quality of the soil in which they are planted.

### **Establishment of the manufactories**

The only thing that dissatisfied me was that a misplaced economy seemed to have presided in the establishment of the manufactories. The buildings were good, the coppers extensive, and the mill well executed, but it was worked by oxen, which have neither the strength not the perseverance of the mules in the West Indies. These oxen are a degenerate kind of buffalo, and it is not without great trouble they can be rendered in any degree useful: the business of driving and whipping them is the hardest employment in the whole manufactory. This mode of working a mill appears to me a very ineligible contrivance; a water-mill certainly would be much more simple and preferable, and the Ganges is rapid enough to afford a fall of water that would set any wheel in motion.

At the period of which I speak, the natives were too little acquainted with a business of this kind to be capable of conducting it, and workmen were accordingly brought from China for the purpose: it is to be hoped however, that the Indians will learn in time to do without these men, and will no longer have recourse to foreigners, who are not to be obtained but at an expense that enhances the price of the sugar, which will prove of little ultimate advantage, unless it can be brought in price to bear some proportion in Europe to that of the West Indies.

### **4. Produce at Tehri, William Moorcroft<sup>4</sup>**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February we resumed our journey, and crossed the Bhagirathi by a swinging bridge. Both banks of the river, as far as the eye could reach, presented the appearance of cultivation. The road, leaving it on the right, proceeded through a pass on the left, and followed the course of a considerable feeder of the Bhagirathi, called the Chakarwara. We crossed large rice grounds, separated by stone fences, and saw several villages under repair, and land breaking up for tillage. Cotton is extensively cultivated in this neighbourhood, and at the village of Manear, where we halted, cotton cloths are manufactured: coarse blankets are also made here, usually about seven feet and a half long, by three feet and a half broad; they sell for a rupee each. There is some traffic with the plains, consisting chiefly of the barter of grain for Lahore salt.

The early part of our next day's journey led us through many fields of young poppy plant, which is cultivated partly for its oil, and partly as a pot-herb. It is eaten both raw, and dressed with butter-milk, salt, and capsicum, and is, in neither form, unpalatable or deleterious. Its use is probably restricted to its young state.



## **5. Some produce in the Himalayan provinces, William Moorcroft<sup>5</sup>**

### **Dye**

Madder grows wild in the vicinity of Joshimath, at the foot of almost every bush, and its black berries overspread their tops in the greatest profusion. The root contains abundant colouring matter, and it is used by the Bhotias to dye the coarse woollen clothes manufactured in the mountains, previously employing a bath of alum, which is found abundantly as an exudation on the face of some of the cliffs. It could be raised in any quantity.

### **Hemp**

Hemp grows freely in the valleys, and on the slopes of the mountains. It affords a strong, fine, and long fibre, and is worked by the natives into a coarse canvas, and into thread and rope. The gum collected from its flowers during the warm part of the day, and called from its resemblance to wax, momia, and well known when adulterated, by the name of kshir ras, has strong narcotic powers. Tar, pitch, resin, turpentine, are all procurable in any quantity. The oil distilled from the turpentine extracted in the hills is lighter, more fluid, transparent and fragrant than any manufactured in Great Britain.

## **6. Rice cultivation in Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>6</sup>**

Although wheat, barley, buck-wheat, millet, maize, pulse, and amaranthus are grown in Kashmir, yet the staple of cultivation is rice. This is sown in the beginning of May, and is fit to cut about the end of August. The grain is either sown broadcast in the place where it is intended to stand till ripe, or thickly in beds, from which it is transplanted when the blade is about a foot high. As soon as the season will admit after the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, the land is opened by one or more ploughings, according to its strength, and the clods are broken down by blows with wooden mattocks, managed in general by women, with great regularity and address, after which water is let upon the soil, which, for the most part, of a reddish clay, or foxy earth, is converted into a smooth soft mud. The seed grain, put into a sack of woven grass, is submerged in a running stream until it begins to sprout, which happens sooner or later, according to the temperature of the water and of the atmosphere, but ordinarily takes place in three or four days. This precaution is adopted for the purpose of getting the young shoot as quickly as possible out of the way of a small snail, which abounds in some of the watered lands of Kashmir, but sometimes proves insufficient to defend it against the activity of this diminutive enemy. When the farmer suspects, by the scanty appearance of the plants above the water in which the grain has been sown, and by the presence of the snail drawn up in the mud, that his hopes of a crop are likely to be disappointed, he repeats the



sowing, throwing into the water some fresh leaves of the Prangos, called Krangos, which either poison the snails, or cause them to descend out of the reach of its influence. The seed is, for the most part, thrown broadcast into about four or five inches of water, which depth is endeavoured to be maintained. Difference of practice exists as to watering, but it seems generally agreed that rice can scarcely have too much water, provided it be not submerged except for a few days before it ripens, when a drier state is supposed to hasten and to perfect the maturity, whilst it improves the quality of the grain. In general the culture of rice is little expensive, though more so in Kashmir than in Hindustan, from its being customary in the former country to manure the rice lands, which is never done in the latter. The manure, for the most part, consists of rice straw, rejected by the cattle, and mixed with cow dung. It is conveyed from the home-stead to the fields by women in small wicker baskets, and is set on the land with more liberality than might have been expected from the distance it is carried. Many of the rice lands are situated much higher than might be thought convenient in Hindustan, and are rather pressed into this species of culture than naturally inviting, but still yield good crops through the facility with which water is brought upon them from the streams which fall down the face of the neighbouring hills. In common seasons the return of grain is from thirty to forty for one, on an average, besides the straw...

## 7. Walnut cultivation, William Moorcroft<sup>7</sup>

It has been observed, that after a few seasons of full bearing, walnut trees fall off in producing fruit, and run with great luxuriance to leaf and branch. To this latter condition the Kashmiris apply the appellation of *must*, and to remedy it, cut down all the small branches bringing the tree to the state of a pollard. During the year following shoots and leaves alone are produced, which are succeeded by a crop of fruit, in that ensuing, so abundant, as to compensate for the absence of nuts in the preceding season. The cut ends of the branches swell into knots, or knobs, which are somewhat unsightly, and of which the structure has not been accurately examined.

The walnuts which fall whilst green furnish the material for a colour of this tint, which, however, is not permanent; but the husks of the ripe fruit are sold to the dyers, as a basis for a fixed black. When ripe, the fruit of the walnut is retailed in the city for eating...

The country people break the walnuts at home, and carry the kernel alone to market, where it is sold to oil-pressers, at the average of seven rupees per kharwar, or ass load. Each ass load of kernel yields eight paji of oil, each weighing six ser, or forty-eight sers in the whole....About twelve thousand ass loads of walnut kernels are annually appropriated to the oil-press in Kashmir, producing, in the gross return of oil and of oil cake, one hundred



and thirteen thousand rupees, independently of the quantity of nuts eaten by man.

## **8. Tobacco plant introduced at Boglipore, Thomas Twining<sup>8</sup>**

Boglipore was [one] of the places at which the tobacco plant was cultivated on its first introduction into India. The now general dispersion and use of this plant show how much may be effected by attention and activity in such attempts, and should serve as a precedent for the choice and trial of other productions more unequivocally conducive to the happiness of the people.

## **9. Tea, William Griffith<sup>9</sup>**

Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> – This day we gave up to the examination of the tea in its native place. It occurs in a deep jungle to the south of the village, and at a distance of about three miles from it. Our route thither lay through first a rather extensive grass jungle, then through a deep jungle. We crossed the Deboru once on our route; it is a mean and insignificant stream.

Nothing particular presents itself in the jungle until you approach the tea, on which you come very suddenly. This plant is limited to a small extent, perhaps to 300 yards square, the principal direction being N. and S. It grows in a part of the jungle where the soil is light and dryish, and throughout which, *ravinules* are frequent, due, Mac. tells me, to the effect of rain dropping from the heavy over-shadowing foliage on a light soil. In addition to this, small mounds occur about the roots of the large trees; but chiefly around bamboos, which are by no means unfrequent. This, however, is of common occurrence in all bamboo jungles. The underwood consists chiefly of Rubeaceae, a small *Leea*, *Cyrthandraceae* and *Filices*, *Polypodium arboreum*, *Angiopteris orassipes*, and a large *Asplenium* are common. Among the arbuscles are a large leaved *Tetranthera* a *Myristica*, *Anonaceae*, *Paederioidea faetidissima*, *foliis ternatis*; *stipulis apicee subulata*, 3-fidis, etc. And among the forest trees are a vast *Dipterocarpus*, the same we met with en route to Kujoo, *Dillenia speciosa*, etc. *Piper* and *Chloranthus* are likewise not uncommon. There is no peculiar feature connected with the existence of the tea in such a place, and in such a limited extent. We were fortunate enough to find it both in flower and fruit, owing to its site; its growth is tall and slender, and its crown at least that of the smaller, very small and ill developed. Large trees are rare; in fact, they have been all cut down by the Singfos, who are like all other natives excessively improvident. The largest we saw, and which Wallich felled, was, including the crown, 43 feet in length. Small plants are very common, although Bruce had already removed 30,000. Mac. thinks they grow chiefly on the margins of the *ravinules* or hollows. Their leaves were all large, of a very dark green, and varying from four to eight inches in length. The pith of the tree felled was



excentric, the greater development taking place as usual on the southern side; it was two and a half inches N., three and a half S.; but about 10 feet above the base this excentricity was nearly doubled. The wood is very compact, and the tree apparently one of slow growth. The largest that Bruce has seen, and which he felled last year, was 29 cubits in length. The jungle was so thick that all general views as to its real extent, and the circumstances limiting it, must be very superficial. To the East the cessation of the lightness of the soil and of the hollows is very abrupt, and strongly influences the tea, only a few small straggles being visible in that direction. The jungle here was choked with grasses, and the large viscous *Acanthaceae* of which we have elsewhere en route seen such abundance. The tree evidently, even in its large state, owes little gratitude to the sun, at least for direct rays, none of which I should think ever reach it. The Singfos however say, that it will only thrive in the shade. We halted after gathering a crop of leaves under a fine *Dillenia*, which was loaded with its fruit. Here the Singfos demonstrated the mode in which the tea is prepared among them. I must premise, however, that they use none but young leaves. They roasted or rather semi-roasted the leaves in a large iron vessel, which must be quite clean, stirring them up and rolling them in the hands during the roasting. When duly roasted, they expose them to the sun for three days; some to the dew alternately with the sun. It is then finally packed into bamboo chungas, into which it is tightly rammed. The ground on which it occurs is somewhat raised above the plain adjoining the village, as we passed over two hillocks on our route to the tea, and the descent did not evidently counterbalance the ascent....

#### **10. Produce in the environs of Allahabad, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>10</sup>**

Though the country about Allahabad is planted with mango groves, tamarinds, figs, and bananas, and the bushes are full of wild roses, yet the character of the country is quite peculiar, from the species of grasses which are introduced from the neighbouring mountains, and from the bamboo, sugarcane, andropogon, and other plants, and a variety of corn, which luxuriate here. Indigo, cotton, wheat, barley, rape-seed, potatoes, turnips, poppy, rice and jowary, flourish in the fields, and the gardens produce, not only bananas and mangoes, but likewise European vines, figs, apples, and plums.

#### **11. Opium gathering in environs of Allahabad, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>11</sup>**

During our first ride, I had an opportunity of seeing the method of gathering opium, which is done in the following manner: – In the evening, incisions are made in the poppy heads, from which the opium exudes during the night, and is taken off before sun-rise, by old and young, with knives, and



collected in poppy leaves. The price of a seer of fine opium is three rupees eleven annas, of which, however, the collector seldom gets more than one rupee. According to the statements of the country people here, an acre of land produces in good years only ten or twelve seers; as the opium is a monopoly, the quantity collected must be delivered to the appointed officers. There are two great opium stations: the opium agent of Benares is at Ghazipoor, and the agent of Bahar at Patna. The former has the superintendence of all the districts from Ghazipoor to Shimla; the latter has under him the eastern and southern district. These agents have their deputies in all parts of the country, who conclude the contracts with the opium planters, receive the opium collected, and send it to the principal stations, with a list of the names of the growers: there the opium is tasted, classed, and valued, it is made up into balls, and packed up in poppy flowers.

## **12. Indian plough extremely simple, Thomas Twining<sup>12</sup>**

[On way from Calcutta to Santipore] Sometimes I saw a man or a boy driving a pair of bullocks before him and carrying at the same time a plough upon his shoulder; for an Indian plough is extremely simple and light, consisting merely of a small beam pointed with iron at one end, and having a handle to guide it with at the other extremity. Of course the furrow which such an instrument is capable of making can have but very little depth. The same simplicity, and almost exactly the same form, exists in all the parts of India I have visited, and a light but fertile soil, moistened by the periodical rains and warmed by a powerful sun, does not seem to require a more laborious or expensive preparation.

## **13. Drill husbandry in southern India, Captain T. Halcott [31 December 1795]<sup>13</sup>**

Until lately I imagined the drill plough to be a modern European invention; but a short time ago, riding over a field, I observed a drill plough at work, very simple in its construction, which upon inquiry I find is in general use here, and has been so time immemorial. This led me to make some further inquiries into their mode of husbandry here, and I find the drill husbandry is universally practiced in the Innacondah district, in the culture of all grains, except horse-grain, and is also used in the culture of tobacco, cotton, and the castor-oil plant. In the practice of this husbandry they have two other ploughs in use here, exclusive of the drill plough, and the common plough: one of these has a horizontal share, and immediately follows the drill plough at work. It is set into the earth about the depth of seven or eight inches, and passes under three drills at once. It operates by agitating the earth so as to make the sides of the drills fall in, and cover the seed-grain, which it does so effectually



as scarcely to leave any traces of a drill. The other plough alluded to, is used after the corn is about eight or ten inches high. It cuts up the weeds between three drills at once, and earths-up the roots of the corn at the same time. I cannot, by writing, give you an adequate description of the three ploughs, but will send you a set of them, if you wish it, accompanied by a man who has been in the practice of working them.

#### 14. Reservoirs for irrigating rice-lands in Madras, Francis Buchanan<sup>14</sup>

I set out early, and soon arrived at *Saymbrumbacum* tank, which is of great extent. It has not been formed by digging, like those in *Bengal*; but by shutting up, with an artificial bank, an opening between two natural ridges of ground. The sheet of water is said to be seven or eight miles in length, and three in width; and in the dry season is let out in small streams, as wanted for cultivation. In the rainy season it receives a supply of water from the river *Chir-nadi*, and from several small streams that are collected by a canal. As at times the water overflows, and would break down the bank by falling over it, and sapping its foundations, the natives in different places construct what they call *Codies*, or sluices of stone. These are twenty or thirty feet wide, and are lower by some feet than the other parts of the bank. On the surface, they are strongly fortified by large stones placed in a sloping direction; so that the water rushes over without undermining the bank, and is conveyed away from the fields by a canal. This is a matter of the utmost importance; for there are instances where, the banks of these large tanks having given way, whole villages have been destroyed by the torrent. In order, however, that when there is plenty of rain, the tank may be completely filled, a row of stone pillars is placed on the top of the sluice; and, on the water rising to a level with their base, a temporary wall is formed of mud, sticks, and straw, placed between the pillars, so as to confine the water till it rises as high as the top of the bank. People watch this night and day, in order to break down the temporary bank, should any additional rain endanger the whole. The water is let out, to supply the fields, by a sluice lined with cut stone, or bricks, and placed under the bank, on a level with the country. The inner end of this sluice is covered by a flat stone, in which is cut a circular opening, that can be shut or opened by a plug fixed to a bamboo, and secured in its place by two pillars of stone, which rise above the level of the water.... The proper name for a tank of this kind, in the *Tamul* language, is *Eray*. *Saymbrumbacum* tank is said to be sufficient to supply with water the lands of thirty-two villages (should the rains fail) for eighteen months. In these villages, it is said, there are five thousand persons employed in agriculture. In a county liable to famine from want of rain, a reservoir, such as this, is of inestimable value.



**15. Rahutt not Persian wheel; from a traveller in Punjab in 1808<sup>15</sup>**

The water is drawn up from the wells by what we call the Persian wheel. Why this piece of mechanism is so named, I know not; and here, where it is in very general use, the natives do not assign its invention to the Persians, but claim it as their own; – they call it rahutt. One of these rahutts I examined particularly; it was worked by two bullocks, and gave a constant supply of water. It was constructed with three wheels, two of which were placed vertically, and the third horizontally. The former were fixed on an axle, over which the governing, or horizontal wheel was turned by the passage of the bullocks; it had 42 pots, each holding  $5\frac{1}{2}$  quarts of water, all fastened to a circular cordage close to each other; these descending two or three cubits into the water, were filled in succession; and on passing their horizontal direction, at the top of the well, emptied themselves into a wooden receiver; whence the water was conducted by a trough to the different channels of divergence. In some places two rahutts are worked at the same time, on opposite sides of the well; and in this way, they water a considerable space in a short time. The receiver is placed within the wheel, but has no connection with it. Water is found throughout this country, at depth of from 10 to 15 cubits from the surface.

**B. SOME NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS****1. In the Himalayan provinces, William Moorcroft<sup>16</sup>****Paper-making**

Before quitting the Himalayan provinces, which are more or less subject to British authority, I shall briefly notice some of their natural and artificial productions, which, if made the subject of attention and improvement, might conduce materially to the prosperity of the mountain population, and enhance the value of an extensive region, which is now comparatively unproductive.

Of the articles which might be profitably exported, one of the principal is paper, which might be manufactured to almost any extent from the *Sitabharua*, a plant that is everywhere found in great abundance. The bark of the stem and branches is detached by bruising, and the cuticle taken off by scraping. The bark thus cleaned, is sometimes boiled to make it tender, and at others, simply steeped in cold water, when it is pounded into a paste and then strained through a cloth, by which the coarser fibres are separated. The finer paste is spread upon a cotton cloth stretched on a frame, and is dried in the sun, when it is raised from the frame and folded. The paper thus rudely manufactured, is of a dirty white colour, and is less fit for writing than for



packing; but it is admirably adapted for the latter purpose, as well as for the manufacture of pasteboard and *papier mache*, by its great strength and toughness. Improved processes in its preparation might also improve its appearance. Owing to the want of any glutinous or mucilaginous admixture, the Sitabharua paper becomes rough and downy by rubbing, but when, as is sometimes practiced in Nepal, the milk of unripe wheat is mixed with the pulp, the paper retains a smooth, uniform, and somewhat lustrous surface.

## 2. Management of beehives, William Moorcroft<sup>17</sup>

An interesting subject in the rural economy of Kashmir is the management of Bees.

Every farmer in the district of Lar, and I have since found the practice general throughout the whole country, in the eastern part of Kashmir, has several hives in the house, and in some houses I have counted as many as ten.

A provision for hives is made in building the house, by leaving appropriate cavities in the walls. These somewhat differ in size, but agree in their general form, each being cylindrical, and extending quite through the wall. This tube is lined by a plastering of clay-mortar, about an inch in thickness, and the mortar is worked up with the chaff or husk of rice, or with the down of thistles, which latter is employed also for clay-mortar in general, being the first application of this substance to the use of man I have yet witnessed....

It does not appear that there is any particular rule for the height of the hives from the ground, they sometimes being confined to the walls of the lower or basement story, generally appropriated to cattle in the farm houses of Kashmir, at others are inserted into those of the first-floor, but are frequently seen in both situations in the same house, as well as in the walls of its out-buildings...

## 3. Fishing

### (a) Fishing in the Alaknanda, William Moorcroft<sup>18</sup>

The Alaknanda produces species of trout which differs from any variety known in Great Britain. The lines employed in catching it are made here of the fibres of a creeping plant called *murwa* (*Sansevieria zeylanica*), and are remarkable for fineness and strength. In fishing, a small yellow flower is attached to the loose end of the line, and several nooses of white horse-hair are fastened round it: a leaden weight is passed through the center, by which the line is sunk. The trout, attracted by the new object thus presented to them, come swimming about it, and being entangled in the snares, are drawn to the surface with great dexterity by the Srinagar fishermen.



**(b) Manner of catching fish in the Terai region, Bishop Heber<sup>19</sup>**

Sir Robert Colquhoun said it was well worth while to see their manner of catching the fish, and we all three went in the evening to the spot where they had laid their nets. It was a small rapid in the river, more shallow than usual, above and below which was a long net, from the space between which they scooped out all the fish which they could find, having, as I understood, drawn their nets in opposite directions up and down the stream, till they had enclosed a considerable number in a comparatively narrow space. To catch them, however, they had neither casting nor scoop nets, nor any thing but their hands, which, as well as their teeth, they used with much dexterity, hunting the fish among the large stones in a very amusing manner.

**(c) Pula fisheries of the Meannees [Indus], Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>20</sup>**

The fisherman first of all lays a large, oval, iron vessel in the river, commends himself to the protection of Allah, and places himself on it in such a manner that his body covers the opening at the top; he then by the aid of his hands and feet works his way on the stream. He carries in his girdle a small spear, and in his right hand a fork nearly fifteen feet long, to which a wide net with a running knot is fastened, and which closes as soon as the fish is caught: the fish is then killed with the spear and thrown into the vessel. We likewise saw some fishermen with a large net thrown over their left shoulder. Before the Meannee goes into the river, he will wander for miles along the banks, and then let himself be driven by the current, because the Pula swims against it.

**C. MANUFACTURES****1. Cloth, Robert Orme<sup>21</sup>**

A people born under a sun too sultry to admit the exercise and fatigues necessary to form a robust nation, will naturally, from the weakness of their bodies (especially if they have few wants), endeavour to obtain their scanty livelihood by the easiest labours.

It is from hence, perhaps, that the manufactures of cloth are so multiplied in Indostan. Spinning and weaving are the slightest tasks which a man can be set to; and the numbers that do nothing else in this country are exceeding.

It is observable, that the manufacturers of cloth prevail most, both in quantity and perfection, in those provinces where the people are least capable of robust labours.

In the northern parts of the kingdom, where the men have more bodily strength, they weave hair, or the coarsest of cloths.



On the coast of Coromandel, and in the province of Bengal, when at some distance from the high road, or a principal town, it is difficult to find a village in which every man, woman, and child is not employed in making a piece of cloth.

The assistance which a wife and family are capable of affording to the labours of the loom may be much contributed to the preference given by a lazy people to this manufacture.

The thread is laid the whole length of the piece of cloth: hence the weavers live entirely in villages, as they could work no where else in this manner.

A weaver amongst the Gentoos is no despicable cast. He is next to the scribe, and above all the mechanics. He would lose his cast, were he to undertake a drudgery which did not immediately relate to his work....

As much as an Indian is born deficient in mechanical strength, so much is his whole frame endowed with an exceeding degree of sensibility and plianthood. The hand of an Indian cook-wench shall be more delicate than that of an European beauty: the skin and features of a porter shall be softer than those of a professed *petit maitre*.

The women wind off the raw silk from the pod of the worm. A single pod of raw silk is divided into twenty different degrees of fineness; and so exquisite is the feeling of these women, that whilst the thread is running through their fingers so swiftly that their eye can be of no assistance, they will break it off exactly as the assortments change, at once from the first to be twentieth, from the nineteenth to the second.

The women likewise spin the thread designed for the cloths, and then deliver it to the men, who have fingers to model it as exquisitely as these have prepared it. For it is a matter of fact that the tools which they use are as simple and plain as they can be imagined to be. The rigid, clumsy fingers of a European would scarcely be able to make a piece of canvass, with the instruments which are all that an Indian employs in making a piece of cambric.

It is further remarkable that every distinct kind of cloth is the produce of a particular district, in which the fabric has been transmitted, perhaps for centuries, from father to son – a custom which must have conducted to the perfection of the manufacture.

I should perhaps, with my reader, have thought this detail of so simple a subject unnecessary, had I not considered that the progress of the linen manufacture includes no less than a description of the lives of half the inhabitants of Indostan.

## 2. Muslin of Bengal, De Grandpre<sup>22</sup>

Among the productions of industry, ought principally to be mentioned the different kinds of muslins, some plain, others striped, and others again



worked with gold, silver, and cotton, of which the finest are made at Dacca, a town in the northern part of the province, where there are many manufactories; to these must be added the doreas and terrindams, the different sorts of linen under the names of cossaes, nainsooks, gurrahs, ballasores, the chintzes of Patna, the carpets of Barampour, handkerchiefs and pieces of silk and of cotton.

The English have established manufactories for printed linens in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, that in no long time will totally ruin those manufactured by the natives of Patna, which are greatly inferior, and are besides less easily disposed of, on account of the distance of Patna from the capital.

### **3. Shawls of Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>23</sup>**

The manufacture for which Kashmir is celebrated throughout the world, is that of the light, warm, and elegant article of dress which, from its native appellation, is known as shawl...The wool that is employed in this manufacture is of two kinds – the fleece of the domestic goat, called Pashm Shal (or shawl-wool), and that of the wild goat, wild sheep, and other animals named Asali Tus. The wool of sheep is not regularly, but is sometimes clandestinely imported, being loaded with the same heavy duties as that of the goat.

The quantity of shawl-wool annually imported varies between five hundred and one thousand horse-loads, each of which is equal to nearly 300 lbs.: the whole quantity of the Asali Tus does not exceed 1200 lbs. The wool was formerly supplied almost exclusively by the western provinces of Lassa and by Ladakh; but of late considerable quantities have been procured from the neighbourhood of Yarkand, from Khoten, and the families of the Great Kirghis horde. It is brought chiefly by Mogol merchants, who exchange it for manufactured shawl-goods in Kashmir, which they dispose of advantageously in Russia....

The price of dark-coloured wool is about one-third, or a half less than that of white wool.

The wool exposed for retail by the purchaser is bought by women for the purpose of spinning it into yarn...

The first task of the spinner is to separate the different materials of which the fleece consists...

Much attention is required to free the wool from the hair, and the process is a tedious one.

The next step is cleaning and separating the wool. A quantity of husked rice is steeped in clean cold water, for a day and a night, or longer, until it becomes soft, when it is ground or bruised upon a stone slab to fine flour. Thin layers of this and of the picked wool are laid alternately, and squeezed with the hand until they are completely intermixed. A little water may be occasionally sprinkled over the heap, if the weather is hot and dry, else it is



not necessary. Soap is never used, as it makes the wool harsh; and its employment in Hindustan being communicated to the Kashmirians, induced them to boast that in this matter, at least, they were more knowing than Europeans. After being thus treated for about an hour, the flour is shaken out, the wool opened and torn to pieces, chiefly by the nails, and made into somewhat square, thin, elastic pads, called Tumbu. In this process the Phiri, or seconds-wool, is extricated. Though too coarse for fine shawls, it is used in the manufacture of those of inferior quality, and of a strong shawl-cloth called Patu. The tumbu is then worked out into a thin flat roving, about half a yard long, which is called a Mala. The mala is folded up to the size of the tumbu, and deposited in a deep pot of red earthenware, called a Taskas, to be out of the way of dust or accident, till required for the spinning-wheel...

Women begin to work at daybreak, continue with little interruption the whole day, if not taken off by other domestic affairs, and extend their labour until very late in the night, spinning by moonlight, when available, and when they cannot afford to purchase oil for a lamp. The fine wool is spun commonly into about seven hundred gaz, each gaz consisting of sixteen girahs, about equal to nails. This yarn is doubled and formed into twist, which is cut into two hundred lengths, each length of three gaz and a half, this measure being suited to the length of the warp for shawl. From the phiri, or seconds-wool, about one hundred gaz of yarn are also produced...

Shawl-wool is sometimes spun by men with a loose spindle like that used in Ladakh. These men are called Trakhans, and the yarn thus spun is the finest; but very little of it is now made. Girls begin to spin at the age of ten, and a hundred thousand females are employed in this occupation in Kashmir. About one tenth of this number are supposed to spin for the purpose of obtaining shawls for themselves, or for other members of their families, and nine-tenths to earn their livelihood...

Having ascertained the kind of pattern most likely to suit the market, the weaver applies to persons whose business it is to apportion the yarn according to the colours required; and when this is settled, he takes it to another, whose function it is to divide the yarn into skeins accordingly, and each skein is delivered to the rang rez, or dyer. When the body of the cloth is to be left plain, the phiri or seconds-yarn, is alone given to be dyed. This is generally about the thickness of common cotton sewing-thread, is loosely twisted, of a coarser quality than the yarn used for the cloth, and is preferred for employment in flowers, or other ornaments, from its standing higher, and being, as it were, embossed upon the ground.

The dyer prepares the yarn by steeping in clean cold water. He professes to be able to give it sixty-four tints, most of which are permanent...The occupation of a dyer is invariably hereditary. The whiter and finer the fibre of



the wool, and the finer the yarn into which it is made, the more capable it is said to be of receiving a brilliant dye; and this is one reason why the fine white wool of the goat is preferred to that of the sheep.

The Nakatu adjusts the yarn for the warp and for the weft. That intended for the former is double, and is cut into lengths of three gaz and a half, anything short of that measure being considered fraudulent. The number of these lengths varies from two thousand to three thousand, according to the closeness or openness of texture proposed, and the fineness or coarseness of the yarn...

The Pennakam guru, or warp-dresser, takes from the weaver the yarn which has been cut and reeled, and stretching the lengths by means of sticks into a band, of which the threads are slightly separate, dresses the whole by dipping it into thick-boiled rice-water. After this the skein is slightly squeezed, and again stretched into a band, which is brushed and suffered to dry: by this process each length becomes stiffened, and set apart from the rest.

Silk is generally used for the warp on the border of the shawl, and has the advantage of showing the darker colours of the dyed wool more prominently than a warp of yarn, as well as hardening and strengthening, and giving more body to the edge of the cloth. When the border is very narrow it is woven with the body of the shawl; but when broader, it is worked on a different loom, and afterwards sewn on the edge of the shawl by the rafugar, or fine-drawer, with such nicety, that the union can scarcely be detected...

The weavers are all males, commencing to learn the art at the age of ten years. In all transactions there are two parties, the master, or ustad, and the scholar, or shahgird, the former being the capitalist, the latter the mechanic...

The loom differs not in principle from that of Europe, but is of inferior workmanship. An ustad has from three to three hundred in his establishment, and they are generally crowded together in long low apartments. When the warp is fixed in the loom the nakash, or pattern-drawer, and the tarah-guru, and talim-guru, or persons who determine the proportion of yarn of different colours to be employed, are again consulted...

The workmen prepare the tujis, or needles, by arming each with coloured yarn of the weight of about four grains. These needles, without eyes, are made of light, smooth wood, and have both their sharp ends slightly charred, to prevent their becoming rough or jagged through working. Under the superintendence of the tarah-guru, the weavers knot the yarn of the tuji to the warp. The face, or right side of the cloth, is placed next to the ground, the work being carried on at the back or reverse, on which hang the needles in a row, and differing in number from four hundred to fifteen hundred, according to the lightness or heaviness of the embroidery. As soon as the ustad is satisfied that the work of one line or woof is completed, the comb is brought down



upon it with a vigour and repetition, apparently very disproportionate to the delicacy of the materials....

When finished, the shawls are submitted to the purusgar, or cleaner, whose business it is to free the shawl from discoloured hairs or yarn, and from ends or knots: he either pulls them out severally with a pair of tweezers, or shaves the reverse face of the cloth with a sharp knife: any defects arising from either operation are immediately repaired by the rafugar...

When partly washed the dhobi brings the shawls to the merchant, that they may be examined for any holes or imperfections... This is done with clear cold water, using soap very cautiously to white parts alone, and never to embroidery.. After being washed, the shawls are stretched in a manner which answers in some degree to calendaring: a wooden cylinder in two parts is employed for this purpose, round which the shawl, folded so as not to be quite as broad as the cylinder is long, is carefully wrapped, being occasionally damped to make it fold tighter; the end is sewn down: two wedges are then gradually driven between the two parts of the cylinder at the open extremities, so as to force them asunder, and the surrounding folds of the shawl are thus stretched to as great an extent as is consistent with its texture. The piece remains in this state for two days, when it is removed to be packed...

#### **4. Shawls at Amritsar, William Moorcroft<sup>24</sup>**

At Amritsar shawls are largely manufactured, but they are of an inferior quality. The manufacture seems to have been introduced by Kashmir families, who, before the Sikh conquest of that province, fled to the plains from the oppressive government of the Afghans. The yarn was formerly imported from Kashmir, but the Governor of that country has prohibited the export, at the request, he pretends, of the Kashmirian weavers, but, in reality, to discourage the foreign manufacture of shawls, the duty on which constitutes the chief source of his revenue. The yarn employed at Amritsar is therefore prepared there partly from the wool of Thibet, and partly from that of Bokhara. From the former a third of fine wool is usually obtained. The latter is of mixed colour and uncertain quality, and is, I suspect, adulterated with the down or fine wool of the yak. The Thibet wool, when picked, sells for six or eight Nanak Shahi rupees a ser. The latter from two to four.

The web yarn is employed double, as well as the weft, which latter is nearly four times as thick as the former. The twist of the thread is very loose, and this, I imagine, contributes essentially to the softness of the cloth.

Having experienced insurmountable difficulty in picking and cleaning a parcel of shawl wool I brought down from Bhot, I took advantage of my stay at Amritsar to ascertain how these operations were to be best effected. A family of Kashmiris lodged in the gateway of my residence, and the wife picked and



cleaned about two ounces of Thibetan wool in my presence. Of this quantity nearly half was fine, nearly half consisted of coarse hair, and the rest was dust and refuse. It was picked by hand in about two hours. Some rice which had been steeped in clean water for two days was then taken out and drained, and before it was quite dry was bruised and ground to flour, in a wooden dish with a stone. Into this the wool was thrown, and it was rubbed and kneaded with the hand until every part of it was impregnated with the rice, when it was taken out and separated. This process was repeated, and after the second opening and drying it was ready for spinning. The spinning-wheel was the coarse implement in common use. A woman could spin about a rupee's weight (about one hundred and seventy-five grains) of fine yarn in a day, and her husband could earn about two anas and a half by weaving. The weavers are all miserably poor, and can scarcely procure subsistence. Many came to me and offered to accompany me wherever I pleased to take them.

#### **5. Production of gun and pistol barrels in Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>25</sup>**

The manufacture of shawls, however important to the population of Kashmir, is not the only mechanical process to which their industry is directed, and their workmen have considerable reputation for the fabrication of gun and pistol barrels. It seems likely that upon the introduction of the use of fire-arms, the method long, and perhaps exclusively known to the Asiatics, of manufacturing sword blades of peculiar excellence, was transferred, with some modification, to that of gun-barrels, and are still in use for that purpose...

#### **6. Leather, William Moorcroft<sup>26</sup>**

A fabric of much greater importance to Great Britain than that of damasked sword-blades is that of Yirak leather, or leather suited for saddlery. Such pieces of this as came in our way were usually old narrow slips employed as reins and head-stalls; but the leather was strong, solid, heavy, and pliable, without any disposition to crack. Some of the pieces had been in use eighteen or twenty years, and were none the worse for constant wear. The price was four times that of other leather made in Kashmir.

#### **7. Paper products, William Moorcroft<sup>27</sup>**

A branch of manufacture for which Kashmir has long been celebrated, is that of ornamented pen-cases made of paper. They are of several varieties, classed under two heads – Masnadi, or royal, and Farsi, or Persian: – the former are articles of table-furniture, more or less bulky; the latter are portable. They are usually long, shallow boxes, rounded at the ends, with a sliding convex cover, and the masnadi have sometimes trays or stands, or are fitted with feet.



Part of the interior is separated to hold an inkstand. They are remarkable for the variety and elegance of the patterns with which they are painted, most generally of flowers, for the brilliancy of their colours, and the beauty of the varnish. They are most commonly made of paper, which has been written upon, but sometimes of lightwood. The ground of the colouring is commonly metallic, of gold or of tin, and the pigments employed are cochineal, or the kirmis insect, ultra-marine from Yarkand, white-lead from Russia, as well as verdigris from Surat, and possibly from Britain. Other colouring drugs are found in the country, or imported from Hindustan. Varnishes are obtained from the resin of the aloe or the storax; but the best is that of the Kahruba, which is usually regarded as amber, but is by some said to be copal. Its abundance and cheapness in Kashmir certainly indicate its being the produce of some living plant. The brushes are made of the hair of the shawl-wool goat, and the pencils from the hairs in the fur of the cat....

Paper is made in Kashmir in considerable quantity, from old cloth of the san-hemp, and from cotton rags.

## **D. SKILLS OF WORKFORCE**

### **1. Father Coeurdoux in a letter from Pondicherry, dated 18 January 1742<sup>28</sup>**

#### **Indian techniques**

In this part of India, one can acquire such knowledge as would, when communicated to Europe, contribute to the progress of the sciences and the perfection of the arts.

#### **The technique of painted fabrics, then a craze in Europe**

Take dry fruits called cadou or cadoucai, break the fruit, pluck out the kernel, grind it to a powder, sift and add to it two pints of buffalo milk, soak the fabric in it, remove and dry in the sun, The unctuous milk of the buffalo produces the same effect as rubber.

The technique of colours is very complicated. Blue is obtained by drying and grinding to powder the leaves of the indigo plant; green from palm and the cadou flower. Yellow "needs no long explanation," but to get red take water with a bitter taste; mix two ounces of powdered alum in two pints of water; add four ounces of red wood, Sapan wood, also powdered; leave to stand in the sun for two days. The red colour will not be fast unless you add powder of the chaia root.



**2. The engineer, Legoux-de-Flaix [arrived in 1769] noted several Indian techniques ahead of those in France, particularly in the field of agriculture<sup>29</sup>**

Inventors of the sciences and of almost all the arts, the Indians have made precious and precise observations on agriculture...and have carried out many trials and experiments in all the branches of rural economy – an admirable consequence of civilization and of the aversion that Hindus have always had for war.

**3. Talented artisans, William Macintosh<sup>30</sup>**

In arts [of imitation] the Hindoos are so dextrous, that the original model is not to be distinguished from the new production...For works of imitation, their nature seems peculiarly fitted, by that patient perseverance which so eminently distinguishes them...And with all this perseverance and straining of attention, they preserve an evenness of spirits.

**4. Have no machines, De Grandpre<sup>31</sup>**

Mechanism and the arts are still in their infancy throughout India. The natives have no machines, no instruments out of the common way, nor the least knowledge of hydraulics: they have scarcely even the necessary utensils for the works they undertake. Neither their carpenters nor joiners have benches, but work sitting on the ground, employing their great toe to keep firm whatever they are working at, which they persevere with great patience in fashioning. They make little use of the axe, as it obliges them to work standing; but they do not fear attacking anything, however large, with the chisel, which they can use sitting. The whole of a joiner's tools in this country consists of a miserable line, a chisel, a mallet, and a saw. With these instruments alone, assisted by patience, they accomplish any work of which a pattern is given them.

The goldsmiths are no better furnished. You send for a workman either in gold or silver whenever you have occasion for one, and he places himself in a corner of the court with his implements, consisting of a hammer, an anvil, an indifferent file, a portable forge, and a crucible. With these he works a whole day to make a ring and will succeed in fabricating other articles that require no great invention. There are some, however, that they will not undertake. Our best European productions are above their ability; but they make not withstanding, in their way, a very considerable variety.

Smiths are equally behind hand, and yet find no inconvenience in forging every thing. They place themselves they care not where, make a small hole in the ground, and kindle a fire in it. To the fire they apply a pair of bellows made of two sheep-skins well sewed together, terminating in a tube at one end to conduct the air, but open at the other, and nailed to two pieces of wood



serving as handles. The smith, seated before his fire, works these bellows with his hands, while his feet are employed in holding or turning his iron in the fire: when it is hot, he ceases blowing, and his anvil being near, he forges whatever he wishes without rising. If the piece he would heat be too large for one pair of bellows, he employs two, and could even use three without any other inconvenience than having two children to assist in working them. Thus, a hammer, anvil, and two sheepskins, are every thing he stands in need of. With these he will fabricate every article of iron-work necessary in building a house.

Their sculptors have no better implements than their joiners, and there cannot be a greater curiosity than to see with what address they fashion the blocks under foot.

Except for linen cloths, they have no painters. They stretch the cloth in their court-yard, and sit down to work on it; for here, as in every other trade, they are ignorant how to do any thing standing. Their tools consist of a brush or two of bamboo-wood, of which the ends are beaten soft, and converted into threads of no great fineness. With these wretched instruments dipped in colour, which they keep in a kind of wooden box, they design and paint the beautiful Indian goods, which we find it difficult to imitate in Europe. They hold the brush between the first and second fingers, in the same manners as they hold the pen when they write; but they have no great need of patience in this talent, as they design with admirable celerity.

Of all their tools or machines, that used in weaving approaches the nearest to ours. In Pondicherry, there are some formed exactly on the same model; but in the villages they are much more simple. In other respects, with the exception of the workman's convenience, and the excellence of the different parts, their looms are very much like ours, and produce the same effects. Nothing can be more portable than they are : when a family moves to fresh quarters, or sets out on a journey, a child will bear the whole machine in its arms, when taken to pieces, and thus carry the fortune of the whole house.

The instrument used by carders of cotton is the only one which seemed to me to be ingenious. Cotton is the source of their wealth; and it is therefore not surprising, that they should have bestowed on a machine that prepares it for spinning some additional pains. It is large, with a head nearly resembling the handle of a violin. On this instrument a large gut is stretched, which they pinch with the cotton, and the vibration, tossing in the air, separates, and cleans it perfectly.

Their spinning-wheels are exactly like the large wheel which our peasants use in spinning wool. The fineness of the thread depends on the skill of the workman.



**5. Method of constructing buildings, De Grandpre<sup>32</sup>**

The manner in which they build large edifices is rather extraordinary. Their houses are of brick, and in erecting these they proceed in the ordinary way: but when they have pagodas or chauderies to construct, and great weights to lift to a considerable height, they act upon a very different plan. As they have neither planks, masts cranes, nor any other instrument for the accumulation of force, they introduce a very ingenious substitute. The foundations are laid as usual, and the first row of stones being raised above the surface, they throw up earth against it, and slope it down on the outside. In laying the second row, they roll the stones on by means of this slope, and thus get them to their place without the least inconvenience; then bringing more earth, they increase the slope, and lay every row of stones in the same manner till the whole is complete; so that when the building is finished it is perfectly buried, and is no bad resemblance of a small mountain sloped regularly on all sides. The earth is afterwards carried away, and the building remains entire.

**6. Skilled in spinning, De Grandpre<sup>33</sup>**

The skill of the Indians in the article of spinning is well known; the delicate textures with which they furnish us are a proof of it. Some cotton is spun so exquisitely fine, that the force of the air alone is sufficient to break it; in this case it is worked over the steam of boiling water, which, by moistening the cotton, renders it more ductile, and less liable to break, than when it is dry....

At Madras very handsome handkerchiefs of a large checked pattern, excellent in the colouring, and of a peculiar fineness, are fabricated.

**E. BAZAARS****1. The great bazaar at Hooghly, John Burnell<sup>34</sup>**

The great Bazar or main street is of most remark extending near three-quarters of a mile, you enter it from the Chinchery through two large gateways including in the vacancy a square building running from gate to gate serving formerly as stables for the horse belonging to the garrison, and in the center or midway between the gates a small mosque, tho' it is as well as the whole building in general mostly ruinate.

In the northermost of these two ports was posted a company of Europe soldiers in the late wars, mostly upon the merchants account, they keeping guard shutting up their gates every night at the usual hours, though they were but of small defence to them being inch and half plank and made to turn upon wooden hinges.



From the port all the remaining length of the street is the Buzar furnish'd on each side with stalls and shops well furnish'd and stock'd with a universality of commodities that the buyer may provide himself at all times with whatever his occasions require, as well European as Indian vendibles.

## 2. Bara Bazaar, Rev. James Long<sup>35</sup>

Bura Bazaar seems from an early period to have been the nucleus of native trade. The Marwari and other merchants found there are all over India, and even beyond it. Forster in his travells in 1782-83 met with 100 Hindu merchants at Heart carrying on a brisk commerce, another 100 men at Tarshish, and others settled at Baku, Mushid, Yezd, and along parts of the Caspian and Persian Gulfs.

## 3. Bang Bazaar, Calcutta, Honoria Lawrence<sup>36</sup>

Going in from Cossipore to Calcutta we passed through the Bang bazaar, a very long range of the native town, sufficiently disagreeable in itself, but to a stranger very amusing. The streets were always crowded with bullock carts, coolies carrying loads on their heads, banghy-bearers, carrying their burthens suspended from each end of a long elastic piece of bamboo, laid across one shoulder. Buggies, (gigs or cabriolets), with the hood put up to exclude the sun, perhaps a fakir shouting out for charity, and exhibiting an arm which for years he has held in an erect position, till the flesh has wasted away, and the nails are like birds' claws. Africans, Chinese and Armenians each with their distinctive characteristics of feature and dress. A *rattle* or idol car on high wheels with a raised platform on which are frightful images. And, never to be forgotten, the *cranchee*, a fourwheeled carriage which looks like a ghost of a deceased Hackney coach. It is drawn by two *tattoos* or small shaggy native horses. The harness is of rope and as in the *hackerries*, there is a pole with a transverse bar resting on the horses necks. On a low seat behind the steeds sits the driver, generally a dirty, wild looking man, with a quantity of matted hair and wielding a whip long enough for a four in hand. This conveyance is used as you may suppose, only by natives, and within it may be seen perhaps six fat men, covered only round the loins, so that as they squat in the *cranchee* they seem quite naked, their skin shining with oil, and of a peculiarly disagreeable yellow hue, which the natives acquire as they grow fat. The carriage thus filled, looks like a nest of lizards. And away it flies, over rough and smooth.

All these glowing under an Indian sky, and rattling, creaking, shouting, pushing, grunting along make such a confusion as to me was more bewildering than the crossing from the Mansion House to the Bank. The buildings on each side were quite in character with the scenes in the streets. Being chiefly shops,



open in front, raised a few steps, the wares spread on the ground, and the owners squatting and lounging beside them. Among the goods were cotton clothes of all descriptions, brass and earthen pots, shoes and caps, sweetmeats and grain. All sorts of inferior European hard wear goods. Chinese toys and pictures, fans of every kind, women's ornaments of glass and tinsel, wreaths of flowers for the temples, *hookahs* of all kinds, and of course house furniture...

#### 4. Bazaars in Lucknow, Honoria Lawrence<sup>37</sup>

We went out one morning to drive through the city. Our road first led through a fine wide street with clean looking shops. In a native bazaar of the better sort the shops occupy the open front of the lower story, generally raised a step from the street, and screened by an awning of cloth or a mat supported by slanting poles. Doors are seldom seen and indeed could seldom be used for the shop is open like a shed and the goods are stowed inside at night. Near the threshold sits the owner, very much at his ease amusing himself with his *hookah* till a customer calls.

First the *bania*, most important of all. His counter is generally elevated a foot or two and neatly covered with coarse red cotton cloth, ornamented with flowers cut out of white cloth and sewed on. Ranged round are large open baskets and small sacks neatly rolled down round the top containing *atta*, coarse wheaten meal. But though *atta* is for sale at a *bania's* there is little demand for the prepared article. Each family grinds their own and the work is solely that of women. The *chukee* or mill consists of two circular stones, twelve or fourteen inches in diameter laid one on another. Near the edge of the uppermost is a wooden peg inserted as a handle to turn round the stone by, and in the centre is a hole where the grain is poured in. The only preparation is to spread a clean cloth on the ground for the *chukee* and then down sits a woman alone or with a companion to relieve her and "the sound of the grindstone" is thus heard in every village almost in every house during the greater part of the night....

#### List of wares in a *bania's* shop

Dal [split pease], *oojie* a preparation of wheat, like coarsely granulated flour, very white and nice, *mida* flour and other varieties of grain, salt, sugar and spices, large globular jars made of skin holding oil and *ghee*, clarified butter, heaps of tobacco looking like a black paste from the way it is done up. These are the chief ingredients for housekeeping. On the other side there are piles of cooking vessels, brass for the Hindoos and for the Mussulman copper which is tinned over before it is used. These are first the *degchee*, like an orange slightly flattened at the bottom with a wide mouth and a lid that serves as a plate. *Degchees* of every size from a quart to several gallons are the grand



utensil in our kitchen. Then the *talee*, a flat plate with a narrow, standing up rim, the *lota* that most useful of vessels, the smallest holding half a pint, the largest a quart. The *kotura* shaped somewhat like a deep saucer, the *tavah* a convex iron plate on which are baked the thin unleavened bread of the people, and large iron spoons. These various utensils are piled up pyramidically according to their sizes and when you have some of each, your kitchen is finished. At least it wants but the grooved stone and long rolling pin for bruising and mixing the multitudinous ingredients of a curry.

The front of the *bania's* shop is festooned with strings of *chillums*, those cups of red earthenware, which are used to hold the fire and tobacco on the top of the *hookah*. Here too are to be had the indispensable variety of vessels formed of baked red earth without which we should be badly off. The most useful are *guraks* and *soorhais*, the first are globular vessels with a small mouth and short neck the second are like tall-necked squat-bodied bottles and are used to hold drinking water. All these being unglazed are porous and keep their contents cool. Being cheap they are unceremoniously broken and thrown away when they have met with any legal defilement....

Next in number to the *bania's* come the *hulwai's* or confectioners. In their shops is a sunken fire place on the top of which is placed the iron stew pan in which most of the good things are cooked. The common cheap confectionery is composed chiefly of sugar and butter but the more delicately prepared sweetmeats of the native are delicious. Eggs and milk are I believe rarely used. Eggs certainly never come into use among Hindoos who count them unclean, but somehow they make a great variety of very nice confectionery, generally flavoured with rose water. You cannot imagine the swarms of flies and hornets that buzz round the *hulwai*, who seems quite unannoyed by his visitors, and only takes a *punkah* to drive them away when they carry off an unreasonable share of his sweets. The various *meetais* are ranged very prettily on large metal trays, which are set on neat circular stands formed of reed or bamboo. The itinerant confectioners run about the streets carrying on the head a tray of sweetmeat covered with a cloth, in one hand the stand to set it upon, in the other a clumsy pair of scales, made of twine and coarse basketwork, weights made of rough stones and a heap of *cowries* and *pice* to give in change.

The cloth merchant sits among his heaps of cloth, chintz, white calico, muslin, silk and broadcloths, and generally those exposed are of a coarse kind. Here and there a Kashmiri shawl merchant may be seen surrounded by balls of every coloured thread, mending or finishing a shawl. The *durzee* or tailor with a troop of workmen under him [is] generally busiest at the beginning of the hot and cold seasons, preparing the light muslin garments or quickly wadded chintz jackets in common wear.



The jeweller with a tiny portable furnace and a few rude tools doing marvellously delicate work in gold and silver. Often have I seen an old white bearded man with his nose pinched in by a pair of uncouth spectacles poring over his alembic in a most alchemist like style. His fire is charcoal, kept glowing generally by fanning it with a *punkah* or blowing it with bellows. The *punkah*, literally wing, is never shaped like our fans. The large one suspended from the ceiling is merely an oblong frame of light wood covered with cloth and slung edgewise, pulled back and forward by a rope. The hand *punkah* is of various shapes, sizes and materials but is always set on by one side to the handle. The common sort are formed by a date leaf, split and neatly plaited. The bellows are two leather bags meeting at one end, where they are joined to a sort of nozzle. A man sitting on the ground holds a bag in each hand and alternately [dilates] and contracts them.

Among the trades folks one in great request is the *barmooja*, or grain parcher. He or she, for women often do this work, sits over a stove with baskets of various grains and an iron pot on the fire, half full of coarse sand. A handful of grain thrown into this hot sand and stirred about with a sort of broom made of split bamboo becomes in a few seconds *chabenee*, the grain cracks down the sides and turns almost inside out, swelling and curling. The best I think is from rice, but it is likewise made from Indian corn, wheat, pease, etc. *chabenee* is much used by travellers and is eaten to stay the stomach during the daytime until the evening meal is ready.

All these you must imagine sitting on the ground cross-legged and their knees stretched out so far and so flat that the thighs form nearly a right angle with the body while the heels almost touch it. Each religion and sect distinguished by their dress. Properly speaking, no Hindoo ought to wear anything that has been defiled by scissors or needles. His garb is made of three pieces of cloth, one for the turban, one to gird round his loins and another to wear round the shoulders, but very few adhere to this original law except at the time of cooking and eating...

## **5. Bazaar in Bombay, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>38</sup>**

A road leads from the extensive fortifications through a gate towards the west, across a broad esplanade to the Black Town, which is about a mile distant. On our way thither we saw several hundreds of men and women, standing in the most picturesque groups round brick wells, drawing water, washing linen, and refreshing themselves by throwing large pitchers of water over each other. The streets in the Native town are very narrow, and consists of small brick houses, two stories high: the lower story is raised but little above the ground, in which the open bazars are kept, where the dealers sit cross-legged behind their merchandise, which is piled up in baskets. Here a scene of the most busy



and noisy activity constantly prevails, but especially in the evening, when the streets and bazars are lighted by numerous small lamps. Thousands of natives throng the stalls, examining the goods of the dealers, among whom the Bannia (corn chandler), and the Mittiewalla (confectioner), have the chief custom.

The Bannia has very variety of grain, wheat, rice, barley, jowary (*Holcus Sorghum*), bagera (*Panicum spicatum*), Gram (*Cicer arietinum*), &c. exposed for sale in baskets, and in dry weather it is piled up in heaps in the street, in front of his booth. He generally has an iron pan at his side; this he keeps constantly hot, and pours maize into it, which is thus heated and roasted. It is a favourite food of the Indians, but their choicest delicacy is a cake made of flour and sugar, seethed in Ghee (clarified butter): these the Mittie-Wallas arrange with much taste, and attract great numbers of women and children. It is, however, too sweet and indigestible to suit our refined palates, though the natives indulge in it, till they actually become ill.

The Soottar (carpenter) employs only five tools, namely a hatchet, hammer, saw, gimblet, and knife, and with these, in a very awkward sitting posture, he not only makes the neatest furniture, but the prettiest boxes of Sandal-wood, inlaid with steel and ivory, in the most delicate and elegant patterns.

At his side is seated the Moochee (shoemaker), manufacturing singularly formed pointed shoes, and it is remarkable that he generally works with his head uncovered.

A loud hammering indicates the workshop of the Lohar (smith and locksmith), who perform his hard labour in a similar, inconvenient sitting posture.

The Seikelgar (stone and glass grinder) works in a less constrained position, and sets his small stone wheel in motion by means of a tight string.

As soon as the cool season sets in and refreshing winds prevail, the harvest of the Pattangh-walla (the kite-maker) commences, because old and young delight in flying the kite; and while the Mussulman selects those which are adorned with the crescent, the Hindu chooses those which are ornamented with stars and painted in gay colours.

The Bazars (calico printer) displays much skill in printing from wooden blocks, which he holds in his hands; but his goods are not so much in vogue since the handsomer and less expensive English prints have come into fashion.

Next to the Bazars, the Ruiwalla (the cotton beater) and Sellogry (the cotton weaver) generally take their place. The former beats the cotton, just as it is taken from the husk, against a tightened cord, till it becomes loose.

The Sellogry prepares the finest and most delicate tissue on a loom, taking of the flocks with a brush and arranging the threads.

Among the most wretched-looking people are the Dahl-Bechnewallae



(poor women, sellers of dhal, *Cytisus Cajan*), who sit at the corners of the bazars and carry on a little trade in fruit, spices or flowers.

The Batty-walla (candle maker) looks almost equally miserable; during the cool evening he sits by his hoops, which are suspended in the open air, and to which the wicks are fastened. The hoops he turns diligently over a vessel filled with hot wax or tallow, which he pours over the wicks with a ladle, and the current of air thus created quickly hardens them. Candles are, however, in request only in the cool season, and then chiefly by Europeans; lamps made of clay or glass are in general use.

## F. TRADE AND COMMERCE

### 1. Most extensive commerce in Bengal, Robert Orme<sup>39</sup>

When the Europeans entered India, they found at Surat one of the greatest marts in the world. Arabia, Persia, and China, were from hence supplied with cloths, and all other productions of the kingdom. Later we have known a merchant of that city the sole proprietor of twenty ships, none of less burthen than five hundred tons: at present the merchants are seen ruined by the violences of an impolitic government, and we now only hear of the trade of this city.

Some years ago the province of Oude, lying to the northwest of Bengal, became quite impoverished by the excess of the customs and the severity of the collectors: the trade went round the province, instead of going through it. When Munsurally Cawn, the present Vizir of the empire, obtained that Nabobship, he instantly rectified the errors of his predecessors. He lowered the customs exceedingly, and subjected the collection of them to better regulations. This province, being the shortest thoroughfare, immediately recovered its lost trade, and flourished under his administration beyond what it ever was known to do.

Bengal by its situation and productions has the most extensive commerce of any province of the empire. Delhi is from hence supplied with all its linens and silks; the foreign marts of India, Arabia, and Persia, with silk, raw and manufactured, with cloths, with sugars, opium, grain, &c. The European nations make their largest and most valuable investments here. The Nabob Allaverdy Khan obtained the government by his sword, and by that has ever since maintained it. The pay of a very numerous standing army has obliged him to be more rapacious than any of his predecessors were; the merchants therefore are obliged to buy their trade at dearer exactions than they were ever known to suffer: but this prince has not yet exceeded so much, as to leave the commerce of his province destitute of a profit sufficient to excite adventures.

The European nations are possessed of considerable settlements and much



property within his territory; by quitting of which their companies would be ruined: this Allaverdy Khan knows full well: he therefore hesitates not to make exorbitant demands from them; and if matters are not soon compromised, he issues forth orders to stop every branch of their investments, which are dispersed throughout the country at great distances from their principal factories.

It is not to be expected that navigation should have made great progress amongst so enervated a people as those of Indostan. They are unskillful practitioners, and worse theorists. It is common to find a Moor ship wasting three years on a voyage which might easily be performed in one: hence the Europeans are the general carriers of the east.

With this advantage of particular situations, the colonies abroad are enabled to create many private fortunes, without interfering with the interests of the companies on which they depend.

## 2. Chief articles of trade with foreign nations, William Robertson<sup>40</sup>

Of these, the labours of the Indian loom and needle have, in every age, been the most celebrated; and fine linen is conjectured, with some probability, to have been called by the ancients *Sindon*, from the name of the river Indus or Sindus, near which it was wrought in the highest perfection. The cotton manufactures of India seem anciently to have been as much admired as they are at present, not only for their delicate texture, but for the elegance with which some of them are embroidered, and the beautiful colour of the flowers with which others are adorned. From the earliest period of European intercourse with India, that country has been distinguished for the number and excellence of the substances for dying various colours, with which it abounded. The dye of the deep blue colour in highest estimation among the Romans bore the name of *Indicum*. From India, too, the substance used in dying a bright red colour, seems to have been imported; and it is well known that both in the cotton and silk stuffs which we now receive from India, the blue and the red are the colours of most conspicuous lustre and beauty. But however much the ancients may have admired these productions of Indian art, some circumstances, which I have already mentioned, rendered their demand for the cotton manufactures of India far inferior to that of modern times; and this has occasioned the information concerning them which we receive from the Greek and Roman writers to be very imperfect. We may conclude, however, from the wonderful resemblance of the ancient state of India to the modern, that, in every period, the productions of their looms were as various as beautiful.

The ingenuity of the Indians in other kinds of workmanship, particularly in metals and in ivory, is mentioned with praise by ancient authors, but without any particular description of their nature. Of these early productions of Indian



artists, there are now some specimens in Europe, from which it appears that they were acquainted with the method of engraving upon the hardest stones and gems; and, both in the elegance of their designs and in neatness of execution, had arrived at a considerable degree of excellence. An ingenious writer maintains that the art of engraving on gems was probably an Indian invention, and certainly was early improved there; and he supports this opinion by several plausible arguments. The Indian engraved gems, of which he has published descriptions, appear to be the workmanship of a very remote period, as the legends on them are in the Sanskreet language.

### **3. Changing nature of commerce in Bengal, George Forster<sup>41</sup>**

Previously to the era in which the English became possessed of Bengal, the different nations who visited it were obliged to give specie for the greatest portion of the commodities they purchased; there being but a small proportion of articles taken in barter by the natives. This species of commerce, so lucrative to India, and which must have deposited large amount of gold and silver, continued for upwards of a century and an half. But, after the English Government was established in Bengal, the necessity of this commercial system no longer existed; the amount of the revenues became sufficient to purchase the cargoes of the country, and to defray the public expenditures: here, one channel of the influx of specie into Bengal was stopped, and it will be found also, that the revolutions, which in that quarter, advanced the fortunes of the English, have materially lessened the like imports of the other European nations, who traded to Bengal. For, exclusively of finding a current sale for their commodities, they have been enabled to procure, from the English, large sums of money, for bills on Europe. An important change has also been effected on the interior commerce of Bengal, by the extinction of the Mahometan dominions....

#### **Brisk trade at Calcutta**

Though the maritime commerce of Bengal does not maintain the vigour which accompanied it, whilst the Europeans were confined to the coasts of India, and exercised simply the profession of merchants, a brisk and important trade is yet carried on at Calcutta. The advantageous traffic that subsisted formerly between this port and Pegue, Siam, and the Malay islands, now feebly remains; and, unless some favourable change is speedily effected, bears the appearance of a total failure. Though these branches of commerce, silver bullion, gold-dust, and precious stones, were introduced into Bengal; from whence, in return, raw and wrought silks, coarse cotton cloths, opium, and salt-petre, were exported. It hath also been alleged, that, within these late years, the maritime trade of Bengal has received a check from an embargo, or, what is tantamount an excessive high duty laid on the importation of foreign salt.



This restriction has reduced the number of ships, and lessened the considerable exportation of grain, which, before that period, annually took place at the port of Calcutta: yet, though it may have injured the exterior commerce, the revenue of the Ganges salt has been increased, by this restriction, to an amount never produced at any former period. It is painful, perhaps not just, to expatiate on the defects, or the misfortunes of a country, and hold them out to public view; without proposing remedies for the ills that are exhibited. The scantiness of my local knowledge, will only permit me to say, that as the welfare of the British dominion in India, ultimately depends on the prosperity of Bengal, no labour should be thought irksome, no rational plan left untried, which may improve its revenue, or encourage its trade.

#### 4. Hooghly covered with vessels, De Grandpre<sup>42</sup>

The privilege of the company is so great as to prevent any individual from trading to any part of Europe, or at least to England; but from one place to another in India the trade is free, and is very considerable both to China and elsewhere. The river Hougly is in consequence covered with vessels, which add to the opulence and industry of Calcutta. The wealth of this place is indeed extraordinary; silver money they will scarcely deign to mention; they reckon only by the *gulmohur*, a piece of gold of the value of sixteen rupees, or forty-two livres, estimative the piece-of-eight at five livres five sous. The Indians have the practice of clipping the coin, like the Jew in Europe, so that, on receiving a sum of money, it is necessary to be provided with a *serraff*, who weighs and values the different pieces....

#### Extensive trade at Calcutta

The trade of Calcutta is very extensive. It is through this channel that the company obtains the saltpetre, and all the muslins which we see in Europe; while it exports to this part Spanish coins, gold thread, copper, lead, iron in bars and wrought, English manufactures of different sorts for the use of Europeans there, wine and brandy, sea-salt, and marine stores of every kind. Individuals there obtain pepper and arrac from the coast of Malabar; raw silks, nankeens, porcelain, and tea from China, to which place they send in return the cotton of the Malabar coast. The grain of Bengal they export to every part of India, receive silks from Surat, send muslins and European commodities to Macao and the Philippine islands, and give circulation to all these articles in the whole interior of Asia. A commerce which extends to such a variety of branches cannot fail to enrich those who cultivate it, and accordingly Calcutta is the richest town in India. Private merchants, however, are not the most wealthy class of those who reside there; the company's servants are much richer, and become so much more rapidly.



**5. Mercantile class of India most honourable in the world, Sleeman<sup>43</sup>**

I have mentioned the village communities of India as that class of the population among whom truth prevails most; but I believe there is no class of men in the world more strictly honourable in their dealings than the mercantile classes of India. Under native governments a merchant's books were appealed to as 'holy writ,' and the confidence in them has certainly not diminished under our rule. There have been instances of their being seized by the magistrate, and subjected to the inspection of the officers of his court. No officer of a native government ventured to seize them; the merchant was required to produce them as proof of particular entries, and, while the officers of government did no more, there was no danger of false accounts.

An instance of deliberate fraud or falsehood among native merchants of respectable station in society is extremely rare. Among the many hundreds of bills I have had to take from them for private remittances, I have never had one dishonoured, or the payment upon one delayed beyond the day specified; nor do I recollect ever hearing of one who had. They are so careful not to speculate beyond their means, that an instance of failure is extremely rare among them. No one ever in India hears of families reduced to ruin or distress by the failure of merchants or bankers; though here, as in all other countries advanced in the arts, a vast number of families subsist upon the interest of money employed by them.

There is no class of men more interested in the stability of our rule in India than this of the respectable merchants; nor is there any upon whom the welfare of our Government and that of the people more depend. Frugal, first upon principle, that they may not in their expenditure encroach upon their capitals, they become so by habit; and when they advance in life they layout their accumulated wealth in the formation of those works which shall secure for them, from generation to generation, the blessings of the people of the towns in which they have resided, and those of the country around. It would not be too much to say that one-half of the great works which embellish and enrich the face of India, in tanks, groves, wells, temples, etc., have been formed by this class of the people solely with the view of securing the blessings of mankind by contributing to their happiness in solid and permanent works...

It was to the class last mentioned, whose incomes are derived from the profits of stock invested in manufactures and commerce, that Europe chiefly owed its rise and progress after the downfall of the Roman Empire, and the long night of darkness and desolation which followed it. It was through the means of mercantile industry, and the municipal institutions to which it gave rise, that the enlightened sovereigns of Europe were enabled to curb the licence of the feudal aristocracy, and to give to life, property, and character that security without which society could not possibly advance; and it was through the same



means that the people were afterwards enabled to put those limits to the authority of the sovereign, and to secure to themselves that share in the government without which society could not possibly be free or well constituted. Upon the same foundation may we hope to raise a super-structure of municipal corporations and institutions in India, such as will give security and dignity to the society; and the sooner we begin upon the work the better.

**6. Hindu bankers and money dealers at Shikarpur, Charles Masson<sup>44</sup>**

The city, renowned for its wealth, is particularly celebrated for its Hindu bankers and money dealers, whose connections are ramified throughout the countries of Central Asia, and of Western India. It is especially the home of these people, where their families are fixed, and where are detained those of gomastahs, or agents, located in foreign countries...As the existence of some great center of monetary transactions, in this part of the world, was always indispensable for the facilities of the commerce carried on in it, it is not unlikely, looking at the facts within our knowledge connected with the condition of the adjacent country during the last two centuries, that Multan preceded Shikarpur as the great money mart, and that from it the Hindus removed, converting the insignificant village of the chace into a city of the first rate and consequence...









## **Cities and Transport**

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- A. Cities**
- B. Road transport**
- C. River transport**

### **A. CITIES**

#### **1. Hooghly, Captain Alexander Hamilton<sup>1</sup>**

Hooghly is a town of large extent, but ill built. It reaches about two miles along the river's side, from Chinsura to Bandel, a colony formerly settled by the Portuguese, but the Moghul's Fouzdaar governs both at present. This town of Hooghly drives a great trade, because all foreign goods are brought thither for import, and all goods of the product of Bengal are brought hither for exportation. And the Moghul's custom-house is at this place. It affords rich cargoes for fifty or sixty ships yearly, besides what is carried to neighbouring countries in small vessels; and there are vessels that bring saltpetre from Patna, above fifty yards long, and five broad, and two and a half deep, and can carry above two hundred tons. They come down in the month of October, before the steam of the river, but are obliged to track them up again, with strength of hand, about a thousand miles. To mention all the particular species of goods that this rich country produces is far beyond my skill, but, in our East India Company's sales, all the sorts, that are sent hence to Europe, may be found; but opium, long pepper and ginger are commodities that the trading shipping in India deals in, besides tobacco, and many sorts of piece goods that are not merchantable in Europe.

#### **2. Santipore, old centre of muslin, now in decline due to steam-looms of Manchester, Thomas Twining<sup>2</sup>**

Santipore *was* a large and flourishing town, two miles from the left bank



of the Ganges, sixty miles above Calcutta. It possessed an industrious, peaceful, and happy population of 70,000 inhabitants, entirely Hindoos, and was the centre of a great manufacturing district. The industry of ages had brought its muslins to the highest degree of perfection. They were among the choicest productions of India, and were exported in large quantities to Europe. The East India Company consequently had one of their principal factories here... This factory and the prosperity of Santipore have since ceased to exist; the calicoes and muslins of India, even for Indian use, having been supplanted by the steam-looms of Manchester.

### **3. Kasimbazaar celebrated for its manufactures, Thomas Twining<sup>3</sup>**

The following day we passed Kasimbazaar, a large town at some distance from the river, celebrated for its manufactures of cotton goods and silk. This was one of the places in Bengal at which European factories were first established, and the East India Company have still a commercial residency here. But the great and early importance of Kasimbazaar may be better inferred from the circumstance of its having given its name to the contiguous river, as well as to the extensive island on which it is situated.

### **4. Patna, a centre of extensive commerce, George Forster<sup>4</sup>**

This city is spacious and populous, though much fallen from the importance it held, during that residence of the Subahdar of Bahar. The great quantity of poppies cultivated in the contiguous districts, from which opium of an excellent quality is produced, together with extensive salt-petre works, have rendered Patna opulent, and the center of an extensive commerce. The different manufactures of silver, iron, and wood, are little inferior in this city, to those of Europe; and when the rudeness of the tools, with the simplicity of the process, is examined, the degree of delicacy which the artisans have acquired in their several professions, must challenge a high admiration.

### **5. Fine indigo at Tirhoot, Thomas Twining<sup>5</sup>**

The capital of the favoured region [Bihar] is Patna, situated on the right bank of the Ganges, 400 miles above Calcutta. The river flowing here from west to east, the whole front of the city faces the north, looking beyond the Ganges over the district of Tirhoot, remarkable for its healthiness and for its fine indigo. The superiority of this is such as to command a surer sale and a higher price than any other indigo in the markets of Europe, excepting, I believe, that of Manila. The consequence is that many Europeans, English principally, are settled in this district as indigo planters and manufacturers.



**6. Dhaka, Captain Hamilton<sup>6</sup>**

The city is the largest in Bengal, and it manufactures cotton and silk the best and cheapest. The plenty and cheapness of provisions are incredible, and the country is full of inhabitants, but it breeds none of tolerable courage, for five or six armed men will chase a thousand.

**7. Lucknow, George Forster<sup>7</sup>**

Lucknow is a large and populous city but wholly inelegant and irregular. The streets are narrow, uneven, and almost choaked up with every species of filth. The Goomty, running on the north side of the town, is navigable for boats of a common size at all seasons of the year, and falls into the Ganges between Benares and Ghazepour. A line of boats, extended across the river, forms a convenient communication with a large suburb. Shujah-ul-Dowlah made Fyzabad, or Oude, the capital of his dominion; but his son, setting aside that, with many other of his father's arrangements, has fixed his residence at Lucknow.

**8. Kanauj, George Forster<sup>8</sup>**

Kinnouge, before the period of the Mahometan conquest, ranked amongst the most populous and opulent cities of Hindostan. It is mentioned in testimony of its grandeur, that Kinnouge contained thirty thousand shops for the sale of betle and afforded employment for six thousand female dancers and musicians. – A vast mass of ruins interspersed through a wide space, marks the ancient extent and grandeur of Kinnouge; though few distinct vestiges now exist, except some parts of a stone temple erected in ancient times to the honour of Setah, the wife of Ram, which has been exorcised by some zealous Mahometan, and converted into a place of worship.

**9. Najibabad, George Forster<sup>9</sup>**

Najeb-ud-Dowlah, who built this town, saw that its situation would facilitate the commerce of Kashmire, which having been diverted from its former channel of Lahore and Delhi, by the inroads of the Sicques, Marhattas, and Afghans, took a course through the mountains at the head of the Punjab, and was introduced into the Ro-hilla country through the Lall Dong pass. This inducement, with the desire of establishing a mart for the Hindoos of the adjacent mountains, probably influenced the choice of this spot; which otherwise is not favourable for the site of a capital town, being low, and surrounded with swampy grounds...since the death of its founder, Najibabad has fallen from its former importance, and seems now chiefly upheld by the languishing trade of Kashmire.



**10. Jammu, George Forster<sup>10</sup>**

Jumbo is situated on the side of a hill, and contains two distinct divisions, which are termed the upper and the lower towns. The bottom of the hill is washed by the river Rawee, about forty or fifty yards broad, and fordable at most seasons of the year. Many water-mills stand on its banks for grinding corn, which are constructed in a neater manner than any I have been in India; and were introduced by the Kashmirians, who have greatly improved as well as enriched this town. The short stay at Jumbo prevented me from procuring much satisfactory information of its history, or the causes which have produced its important commerce, riches, and luxury for Jumbo, even in its decayed state, is a mart of the first note in this quarter of the country...

The articles of merchandize constituting the trade of Jumbo, and Kashmire, are transported by men, usually Kashmirians, whose burthens are heavy, two of them making the load of a strong mule, and the hire is fixed at the rate of four rupees for each carrier. The shawls, when exported from Kashmire, are packed in an oblong bale, containing a certain weight or quantity, which in the language of the country is termed a *biddery*, the outward covering of which is a buffalo's or ox's hide, strongly sewed with leather thongs. As these packages are supposed to amount, with little variation, to a value long since ascertained, they are seldom opened until conveyed to the destined market...

**11. Cochin, De Grandpre<sup>11</sup>**

Cochin is constructed on a good plan, but the buildings are bad. The governor resides in a house scarcely better than a barn, situated on a spot that has no embellishments, and is overgrown with grass, as the streets are likewise. All the houses are proportionably mean, and an air of wretchedness and inactivity reigns in this colony, as in the settlements in general of the Dutch company in India. With a little exertion, however, Cochin might become a flourishing place: its commerce in the article of pepper might be rendered considerable, by holding out encouragements to merchants, and suppressing the vexations which foreigners experience on the part of the government. Its situation is admirable for the purpose, for it stands on a fine river, capable of admitting very large vessels. The water, at the flood, is never less than twenty feet deep, and the harbour is sufficiently extensive for any ships, however numerous, that might trade to it. A number of small rivers and canals run into it, which facilitate the inland communication to a great distance up the country, and would give extraordinary activity to commerce. Its position at the extremity of the peninsula renders it easy of approach in all seasons, and diminishes the danger to which navigation is exposed by the monsoon from the south-west: nothing but a fine day is necessary to enable vessels to get



out, and even to reach Cape Comarin, from which there is a passage to any part of India. The teak wood, so excellent for the construction of vessels, abounds in this place, and many ships are accordingly built there; it is indeed the most considerable branch of industry that is at present carried on.

### **12. Nadaun, William Moorcroft<sup>12</sup>**

This place was formerly one of great resort, being the chief mart of a rich province, and the favourite resting place of merchants travelling betwixt Kashmir and Hindustan. It was proverbially famed for its comforts and attractions; and "Who that goes to Nadaun will come away again?" (*Jaega Nadaun aega kaun*) is a phrase current in the plains, bearing unequivocal testimony to its reputation. The duties on merchandise passing through it were farmed at 27,000 rupees a year. The whole district now scarcely yields a fourth of that income. The principal article was shawl-goods, which, to avoid the danger of being plundered on the lower road, were conveyed through the states of the several mountain chiefs to Nahan and Dera, and thence to Najibabad or Saharanpur. The heavy duties exacted in each petty principality checked, but did not crush the trade; but as these duties did not purchase security, and the pillage of a whole caravan by one needy and unprincipled Raja was a contingency to which the merchants were nevertheless exposed, they were at last obliged to discontinue the transmission of their merchandise to the low country by this route. The principal persons engaged in the traffic were the Gosains of Jwala-mukhi, the seniors of whom remained at the principal stations, while their pupils or chelas traversed the whole of Hindustan with the most valuable commodities. The confusion that prevailed for some years in the politics of the hill states, and the consequent impoverishment of their rulers, combined with other causes have almost annihilated this traffic, and thinned the community of the Gosains; and the few that reside at Jwala-mukhi are contented to remain at home, subsisting in humble tranquility upon the produce of those lands which they owe to the piety of former benefactors.

Nadaun also suffered severely from its occupation by the Gorkhas... The bazar, which was formerly crowded by bustling traders, is now frequented only by a few fakir and pilgrims; and of the shopkeepers I observed one-third asleep, a third playing at draughts, and the rest scantily and listlessly employed. The vicinity of the town abounds with mulberry-trees of every description; so that if the climate be not unfavourable, the silkworm may be bred here to any extent.

### **13. Hoshiarpur, William Moorcroft<sup>13</sup>**

Hoshiarpur is a large and populous town, surrounded by a brick wall, separated from another town, Bahadarpur, by a few fields only; the latter,



however, is nearly uninhabited. The population of Hoshiarpur consists chiefly of weavers, dyers, confectioners, grain-sellers, and turners in wood. The weavers are almost all Mohammedans, and are an orderly and industrious set of people. They are employed extensively in the manufacture of cotton cloths and muslins, which are sent to distant markets in various directions; as, white cloths to Delhi; white and red to Jaypur and Bikaner; coarse cottons to the Panjab and Kabul, and the finer sorts to Herat, Balkh, Bokhara, and Yarkand. The water of Hoshiarpur is said to be of great efficacy in whitening cloths. The cotton is raised abundantly at the foot of the neighbouring mountains, and commonly sells at from 16 to 20 sers for a Mahmud Shahi rupee.

#### **14. Multan, Charles Masson<sup>14</sup>**

Multan is said to have decreased in trade since it fell into the hands of the Sikhs, yet its bazaars continued well and reasonably supplied with all articles of traffic and consumption. There are still numerous bankers, and manufacturers of silk and cotton goods. Its fabrics of shawls and lunghis are deservedly esteemed, and its brocades and tissues compete with those of Bahawalpur. It still supplies a portion of its fabrics to the Lohani merchants of Afghanistan, and has an extensive trade with the regions west of the Indus.

#### **15. Lahore, William Moorcroft<sup>15</sup>**

Lahore is said to have been twelve kos in circumference, and however this may have been, it is clear, from the ruins of buildings beyond the walls, that it was once much more extensive than it is at present. Such of it as still remains within the walls is apparently very populous. The streets were crowded to an extent beyond anything I have ever witnessed in an Indian city. The houses were in general of brick, and five stories high, but many were in a very crazy condition. The Bazar follows the direction of the city wall, and is not far distant from it. The street is narrow, and this inconvenience is aggravated by platforms in front of the shops, on which the goods are displayed under projecting pent-houses of straw to protect them from the sun and rain. Through the center of the remaining contracted space runs a deep and dirty drain, the smell from which was very offensive. The population consists of Mohammedans, Hindus, and Sikhs, the former in the greatest number.

#### **16. Rawalpindi, William Moorcroft<sup>16</sup>**

Rawalpindi is a town of considerable size, containing a number of low mud-houses with flat roofs, and a large but irregularly-built bazaar. It owes its importance to its having been selected by Shah Sujah for the residence of his family, and of Zeman Shah, whilst he engaged in the contest with Shah Mahmud for the throne of Cabul. A rather large but ill-built mansion was raised



for their accommodation. It appears to be of brick without plaster, and forms a conspicuous object. From the number of persons who accompanied the family Rawalpindi became a place of some demand for grain and merchandise, and it is now the chief mart for the trade between Amritsar and Peshawar. It is chiefly supported by its commerce, for the agriculture of the adjacent lands has been ruined by exorbitant taxation. A few years since the annual revenue raised from them was three lakhs of rupees; it is now less than one...

### 17. Peshawar, William Moorcroft<sup>17</sup>

The city of Peshawar, and plain in which it is situated, have been so fully and accurately, described by Mr. Elphinstone, that it is not necessary to attempt any detailed account of either. Both, however, had much fallen off since his visit, in consequence of civil dissensions and hostilities with Ranjit Singh. Many of the houses of the city were untenanted and in ruins, and in the plain very many of the villages were deserted, and extensive tracts of rich land were uncultivated. In the immediate vicinity of the town the Sikhs had inflicted more mischief than many years' labour could remedy, by destroying gardens and orchards, and demolishing the wells and channels of irrigation. The Bala Hisar, which, at the time of the British embassy, was the occasional residence of the king, and in which their audience took place, was now a heap of rubbish, and the only use made of it by the rulers of Peshawar was as a quarry from whence to procure materials for dwellings of their own erection....

In times of tranquility, and under an enlightened government, Peshawar is admirably situated for an *entrepot* of commerce between the British settlements of India and the countries north of the Hindu Kosh. From British India it is accessible not only by land but by the Indus, the navigation of which, although little known to Europeans, as it has not been attempted by them since the days of Nearchus, is perfectly practicable for boats of considerable burden. From the sea to Attok there is no obstruction of any importance, and the water-carriage continues not only along the main stream some way above that fort, but, by means of the river of Kabul, to within five kos of the city of Peshawar, at a place called Sahiba Patar, where Afghans going on pilgrimage to Mecca usually embark. They reach Karachi Bandar in a month. The advantageous position of Peshawar for the commerce of Khorasan and Peshawar has been noticed by others, but the availability of the upper part of the Indus for this object has been unknown or overlooked, and it seemed, therefore, of importance to ascertain the fact. As affecting the character of Peshawar as a commercial station, it may be right to observe that the objections founded on the extent and influence of the swampy ground in its neighbourhood have been unnecessarily strong. We saw no swamp which might not be easily drained, and of which the recovery would not amply remunerate the cost.



**18. Karachi, Charles Masson<sup>18</sup>**

Karachi, although not a large town, has much trade; it is surrounded with dilapidated mud walls, provided with towers, on which a few crazy guns are mounted. The suburbs, extensive, and generally comprising huts, are inhabited by fishermen and mariners. The port has one hundred vessels, of all sizes and descriptions, belonging to it, and its dunghis venture to Daman, Bombay, and Calicut, also to Gwadar and Maskat. The harbour is commodious for small craft, and is spacious, extending about two miles inwards, at which distance, from its mouth, the town is seated. On a high hill, or eminence, overlooking the entrance to the harbour on the left hand, as it is approached from the sea, is the fort or castle of Manaroh, garrisoned by a small party of Jukias; it is said, there are many guns in it, but it is unexplained who are to work them. The eminence slopes to the beach, on the town side, where there is a circular tower, on which four guns are said, whether truly or not, to be placed. These constitute the defences of the harbour, whose entrance is well defined, having, opposite to the hill Manaroh, five detached rocks and a sand-bank, exposed at low water. Karachi has a cool climate, and may be regarded with classical interest, there being little doubt that it is the port of Alexander, which sheltered for some time the fleet of Nearchus, the first European admiral who navigated the Indian seas.

**19. Amritsar, Charles Masson<sup>19</sup>**

Lahore, although possessing a certain degree of trade and traffic with its populous vicinity, is a dull city, in a commercial sense. Amritsir has become the great mart of the Panjab, and the bankers and capitalists of the country have taken up their abodes there. It has also absorbed, in great measure, the manufacturers, and its prosperity has allured to it a vast number of the starving artisans of Kashmir.

**20. Decline of Surat, Bishop Heber<sup>20</sup>**

The trade of Surat, indeed, is now of very trifling consequence, consisting of little but raw cotton, which is shipped in boats for Bombay. All the manufactured goods of the country are undersold by the English, except kincob and shawls, for which there is little demand; a dismal decay has consequently taken place in the circumstances of the native merchants; and an instance fell under my knowledge in which an ancient Mussulman family, formerly of great wealth and magnificence, were attempting to dispose of their library, a very valuable one, for subsistence. There is a small congregation of Armenians in a state of decay and general poverty; but the most thriving people are the Boras (who drive a trade all through this part of India as bunyans and money-lenders) and the Parsees. These last are proprietors of half the houses in Surat, and



seem to thrive where nobody else but the Boras can glean even a scanty maintenance. The boats which lie in Surat river are of thirty or forty tons, half-decked, with two masts and two very large lateen sails; vessels of greater draught must lie about fifteen miles off, below the bar, at the mouth of the Taptee, but except the ketches in the Company's service, few larger vessels ever come here.

## **21. Poona, Bishop Heber<sup>21</sup>**

The city of Poonah is far from handsome, and of no great apparent size, though, to my surprise, I was assured that it still contains 100,000 people. It is without walls or fort, very irregularly built and paved, with mean bazars, deep ruinous streets, interspersed with peepul tree, &c. many small but no large or striking pagodas, and as few traces as can well be conceived of its having been so lately the residence of a powerful sovereign. The palace is large, and contains a handsome quadrangle surrounded by cloisters of carved wooden pillars, but is, externally, of mean appearance, and the same observation will apply to other small residences of the Peishwa, which, whimsically enough, are distinguished by the names of the days of the week "Monday's Place, Tuesday's Place," &c. The principal building is used at present, on its ground floor, as the prison for the town and district; on the floor immediately above is a dispensary, and a large audience chamber, resembling that at Baroda, which is fitted up with beds as an infirmary for the natives, while higher still, a large gallery is used as an insane hospital...

The cantonment of Poonah is on an elevated situation a little to the west of the city, and in its general appearance and locality reminded me of that of Nusseerabad. Here, as there, the horses are picketted in the open air all the year round, an arrangement which is said to answer extremely well, not only for cheapness and convenience, but also for the health and serviceable state of the animals. The streets are wide, and the whole encampment, I thought, well arranged and handsome; there is a good station-library for the soldiers, another, supported by subscription, for the officers, and the regimental schools, I was told by Archdeacon Barnes, (for I was too unwell to keep the appointment which I had made to visit them) are in excellent order. The Church is spacious and convenient, but in bad architectural taste, and made still uglier, externally, by being covered with dingy blue wash picked out with white.

## **22. Thatta, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>22</sup>**

Tatta, whether it is the ancient Patala, or Minagara, is uncertain, lies three miles from the Indus, on an eminence slightly elevated above the valley, and affording a surprisingly beautiful prospect from a distance: the streets are narrow, irregular, and very dirty; the house, which are built of clay, wood, or



brick, are from twenty to thirty feet high, and resemble square towers with flat roofs, on which the inhabitants are accustomed to sleep, in the open air, during the warm nights. Cakes of dung, used for firing, and prepared by the women and children, are piled up against the walls.

There are only a few mosques in the place, which are built of stone and painted white, but they have the same dirty and ruinous appearance as the town; and there are no traces of the extensive trade which was formerly carried on. The silk and cotton manufactures of the Lundshis, wrought with gold and silver, which were formerly so much in request, are now nearly exploded by those of Mooltan, and the few that are still manufactured here, are usually taken by the Ameers, who pay barely sufficient to enable the weavers to live. The inhabitants are about 10,000 in number; they wear wide garments, Sindé caps, or turbans, and the women long cotton dresses reaching to the ground; poverty and dirt everywhere prevail. We traversed the town in its whole length, passed through the valley, which is irrigated by water wheels driven by oxen or camels, is highly cultivated, and produces corn and cotton....

The British government has four iron steamers on the Indus, which are 120 feet long, 35 broad, and of 70 horse power: they draw only three or four feet water, and are armed with guns (three pounders) and wall-pieces. Along the coast are depots of tamarisk wood for fuel, which consumes rapidly, but gives very great heat.

### **23. Hyderabad, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>23</sup>**

Hyderabad, which has 35,000 inhabitants, is situated on a gentle, rocky, eminence, 200 feet high, which here bounds the valley of the Indus, and like all the other towns in Sindé, is built of clay, wood and brick. The streets are narrow and dirty, the bazars are very animated, and hundreds of people were standing by roadside to look at us as we passed by. The Great Fort likewise forms a quadrangle, with circular projecting towers: in the angles it has clay walls, forty feet in height, with a moat eight feet broad and five deep, which however is dry.

### **24. Mathura, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>24</sup>**

Mathura is built in the form of an arch, on the elevated right bank of the Jumna, hard by the river, where there are numerous flights of steps descending into the water, which is the resort of many hundred persons, who come from far and near to bathe, in this spot which is sacred to Krishna. The town was formerly surrounded by the lofty wall, of which only some fragments and three gates now remain; the old fort, which stands on a high hill, also lies in ruins, but, like the town itself, has an uncommonly picturesque appearance, when viewed from the flat sandy plain on the opposite bank.



The interior of the town is extremely dirty; the streets are narrow, irregular, and dusty, and in some places so ill-contrived, that two persons can scarcely pass without touching each other; where the bazars are situated (of which there are 2350) the houses, which are built of bricks or clay, rise to the height of two or three stories, whereas in all the other parts they are little better than huts. The city is divided into 58 quarters, containing 7000 brick houses with flat roofs, 5000 houses built of clay thatched with grass or reeds, 190 Hindoo mandars or places of prayer, and 19 mosques.

Among the latter is the famous mosque built by the Emperor Aurengzebe, which is called by his name. A magnificent Hindoo temple, erected by Rajah Beer Singh Deo, of Oorcha, at the cost of 36 lacks of rupees, formerly stood here. This temple Aurengzebe caused to be pulled down, and with the materials built the present mosque on its site. The population of Mathura is estimated at 6000 Mussulmans, and 54,000 Hindoos; among the latter there are 15,000 Brahmins and Fakirs, who live about the holy places, and on the Ghauts (open flights of steps), on the banks of the river, and subsist on the alms of the devotees.

## **25. Kanpur, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>25</sup>**

I arrived at Cawnpoor on the 26<sup>th</sup> February, at 1 o'clock, when the heat was 82½° Fahr., which was extremely oppressive. The town itself (situated in 26° 30' north latitude, and 80° 12' east longitude from Greenwich) is small, mean-looking, and dirty; but on the right bank of the Ganges many hundred bungalows, the barracks of the troops, and the bazars, extend in a semicircle, for nearly five miles, which imparts to the whole a striking and splendid appearance. Cawnpoor is a principal station of the British, in which there are at present one European regiment of infantry, one European regiment of cavalry, four regiments of native infantry, one regiment of light cavalry, some companies of artillery and several depots; in all, above 8000 men.

Several of the bungalows are most picturesquely situated, on the banks of the Ganges, which rise to the height of 100 feet: they are fitted up most luxuriously, and have very extensive gardens in which tamarinds, mangoes, bananas, neemes, acacias, and fig trees (*F. rel.*), overshadow a rich carpet of flowers which charms the senses by the magnificence of its colours, and the fragrance of its perfume. In the circumjacent country, there are fine fields of wheat and barley in ear, which are succeeded by the crops of maize, rice, sugarcane, cotton, gram, jowary, and indigo, potatoes, pease, and cauliflower, and other vegetables, are grown in the gardens; but the former are insipid. This is the time of the birds of passage, some of which, especially the ortolans, are considered a dainty: they are rather larger than our larks, but their taste is more piquant. The climate is very agreeable to the European from October to



the end of February, and fires are by no means unwelcome in the morning and evening. On the other hand, the time of the hot winds, from March to July, and the rainy season which succeeds, are equally unhealthy and intolerable.

## **26. Allahabad, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>26</sup>**

The city, which has 30,000 inhabitants, consists of brick houses, of two and three stories high, and has in these latter times become more cleanly, but it is still called by the natives Fakirabad, that is, "the beggars' town," partly on account of its poverty, and partly on account of the great resort of fakirs and pilgrims. Trade and commerce have very much increased, since the establishment of a communication by steam boats between this and Calcutta. The numerous villas, and bungalows of the civil and military officers, surrounded by beautiful gardens, give a grand appearance to the place; for there are, probably, few other spots in India which have such handsome, and richly fitted up buildings of this kind. Roads, planted with avenues, wind between them and lead to the fort, the city, and several places of the principal circumjacent localities, as Allahabad is the seat of a high court of justice and a great military station of two regiments, some depots, and two companies of artillery.

The whole district of Allahabad contains 2760 English square miles, of which, however, only 984,951 acres are cultivated, and is inhabited by a population of 949,446 of whom 651,877 are Hindoos, and 297,569 Mahometans...

## **27. Shimla, Victor Jacquemont<sup>27</sup>**

This place is like Mont d'Or or Bagneres, the resort of the very rich, the leisured and the sick. Nine years ago the officer in charge of the military, political, judicial and financial services of this extremity of the English empire, which was acquired only fifteen years ago, took it into his head to desert his palace on the plains during the hot weather, which was terrible one year, and come up and camp here under the shade of the cedars. He was alone in a lonely spot and his friends came to visit him there. The site, the climate, everything, in fact, seemed excellent to them. They sent for a few hundred hill-men, who felled trees all round this spot, rough-hewed them, and in a month's time, with the aid of workmen from the plains, built a spacious house. Each of the guests wanted one like it; there are now more than sixty of them scattered about the mountain-tops or on their slopes. A considerable village has sprung up as though by enchantment in the midst of the space occupied by them; magnificent roads have been hewn in the rock, the luxury of the Indian capital has been established seven hundred leagues from Calcutta and seven thousand feet above sea-level, and fashion reigns like a tyrant.



## B. ROAD TRANSPORT

### 1. A peculiar vehicle, De Grandpre<sup>28</sup>

The Indians have a vehicle of this kind (carriage) that is peculiar to themselves, and which in my account of their machines, I forgot to mention. Much praise indeed is not due for the invention: it exhibits a whimsical and awkward appearance; the wheels are extremely low, and upon the axle-tree are laid two beams, forming a small cross, to the extremities of which are fixed four upright posts, supporting an extravagantly large head or canopy. This little nook, as it may be called, is entirely open on three of the sides, and inclosed behind only with a piece of cloth: it will scarcely admit two persons, but one may be tolerably at ease, by the help of cushions, upon which he is obliged to sit with his legs bent under him. The carriage is drawn by two oxen abreast, and has a number of small bells fastened to it. It is seldom used in towns; but the rich and superior class of the natives employ it in their journeys to different parts of the country.

### 2. Bearers and Palkies, Honoria Lawrence<sup>29</sup>

The bearers vary much in their mode of carriage, some keeping step and running smooth; others have a dreadful pace. Fancy yourself in a sieve shaken to try to send you through it, and occasionally receiving a smart jog to facilitate the process. Had it been possible to be ground small enough first, I am sure I should have been sifted out on the road the first stage. Some bearers make me quite sea sick. Altogether it is a most amazing conveyance and I have not yet got reconciled to being thus hoisted on men's shoulders. Not that they have any feeling of degradation from the employment; it is what they are born and brought up to and the labour is not greater than most other bodily employment. Eight men run with a *palkee*, four at a time carrying it. They are relieved at stages of about ten miles, which distance they go in about three hours, and then their work is done. It is very pleasant to see the natives in any joint labour of this kind, their good humour and willingness to help one another. Often when I have looked at a set of bearers or boatmen, each taking his turn at the work, without shirking or grumbling, I have thought how differently our own country folk would behave. Fancy too a lady who, if she have a servant in another *palkee* with her, is travelling with twenty men or upward at night through a country where for hours no habitation is seen, she very likely unable to speak a sentence of Hindustani intelligently, and with still less hope of understanding a word the bearers say. Remember too her property, perhaps shawls and jewels, all travel in the *petaras* slung to the ends of a bamboo borne on a man's shoulders, and that she and her possessions are in the power of a score of stout fellows, or double that number when the old and new sets



of bearers meet. All this too on the very ground where *thugs* are slaying scores, ay hundreds of travellers, strangling a man for half a crown's worth of silver ornaments he may happen to have, or not infrequently without any purpose of plunder, merely to keep their hands in. Yet in this way an unprotected woman travells safely from one end of India to the other. Thus I have come from Kurnal hither...

This same *palkee* is a long box, about six foot long, three foot wide and a trifle higher, lined and stuffed with a mattress and pillows. Sliding doors open at each side, and at the ends are little windows. At each end projects a stoutish flattish pole, that behind being straight, that in front slightly curved upwards, the whole is supported on low feet. Four men take this up, two in front, two behind; they have small cushions to relieve the pressure of the pole which rests on the alternate shoulders of the men; that is if the first has it on his right shoulder, the next takes it on his left. When tired they all change shoulders together. Off they trot thus loaded, and keeping up a grunting song, "huh-huh-huh-huh," or something "heek-heek, hah-hah,". They rarely set down the *palkee* till the end of the stage. Good bearers even relieve one another, without setting down, when you feel the jog suddenly cease, and the *palkee* soused down. Then comes the cry of "*baksheesh, baksheesh!*" and the traveller gives a trifle, about sixpence, for the man to smoke.

## C. RIVER TRANSPORT

### 1. Rope transport in the Himalayas, Bishop Heber<sup>30</sup>

We forded the stream without difficulty, though over a very rugged bed; but, during the rains, one of the chuprassees told me, a rope which I saw hanging loosely across the ruined arch, was to transport the postman or any other passenger. He was seated in a basket hung by a loop on this rope, and drawn over, backwards and forwards, by two smaller ones fastened to the basket on each side. This is an ingenious though simple method of conveyance, which is practiced also by the catchers of sea-fowl on many parts of the coast of Norway; it was the only way formerly in use of passing torrents or chasms in these countries; and the stone bridges which the English have erected are very ill able to resist the floods of the rainy season, which rush down these deep descents with great violence and rapidity.

### 2. Passage on river by Deris, or inflated skins, William Moorcroft<sup>31</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March we proceeded up the left bank of the Setlej, opposite to the town of Dehr. Both banks of the river were lined with a succession of small villages the whole way. Dehr, which belongs to the Raj



of Sukhet, on the right bank of the Setlej, is defended by a fort of masonry. The passage of the river was effected on deris, or inflated skins. My party consisted of about three hundred persons, sixteen horses and mules, and about two hundred maunds of merchandise and baggage. Thirty-one watermen, each managing a skin, conveyed the whole across in little more than an hour and a half. The Setlej was about one hundred and fifty feet in breadth, and was running at the rate of five miles an hour. The skins used for this purpose are those of bullocks, which are stripped off in this manner. An incision is made in the back part of a hind leg, almost the whole length, and the skin, being flayed off from the hock upwards, is turned forwards, the same management being observed as in the process technically termed casing a hare, except that the skin is cut through below and round the knees and hocks, the legs being left adhering to the body. The hide is then doubled up, and buried for a few days, in order to suffer so much decomposition as will favour the separation of the hair, which is rubbed off by the hand or a blunt wooden knife, without abrasion of the skin. The skin is then turned inside out, and the natural openings of the eyes, &c., stitched up; it is then turned back again, and the main incision sewed up with thongs of raw hide. The open ends of the limbs are tied, except one, which is left open, as a tube by which to inflate the skin. The thin tar procured from the deodar and other species of pine, is then poured into the skin, and shaken about in it until the flesh inside is well charged with it, and it is then tanned exteriorly, by steeping in an infusion of pomegranate husks. When required for use the waterman blows into it through the hind tube, and ties up the opening. A double thin cord is fastened round the inflated skin, across which the waterman places himself on his chest, holding the string with his left hand, whilst, with his right, he manages a short oar, assisting his passage with his hands and feet. Sometimes a piece of stick is tied in one of the legs, and left projecting from it for the waterman to hold instead of the string. The passenger, with as much baggage as he can carry, sits astride the ferryman's back, with his knees bent, and resting on the skin. When heavy and bulky articles are to be transported, two skins are brought together, the ferryman of each laying hold of one of the projecting legs of the other skin, and a frame or raft, supporting the burden, lies across the backs of both. A charpai, or Hindustani bedstead, forms the most convenient raft. Horses and mules are led over, the waterman holding them by a string in one hand, whilst he paddles himself and his human load across in the manner above described. When not inflated the skin is slung over the back, and carried about without any inconvenience. No expedient seems equally well adapted for the transport of large bodies of men and baggage over the most rapid rivers, or so likely to be serviceable as a wreck buoy or float, to be carried on board ship. The cost of a deri usually a rupee and a half, and its weight is not above sixteen pounds.



A couple of deri-men usually accompany persons of rank hunting in the hills, in order to carry them across the mountain streams, the rapidity and fury, if not the depth of which, render it impossible to ford them without such assistance.

## BRIDGES

### 3. Jhula [swinging bridge], William Moorcroft<sup>32</sup>

We left Srinagar [the old capital of Garwal] on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February, a little before noon, and at some distance from its western termination crossed the Alaknanda by a jhula, or swinging bridge, of considerable span, and of the construction common in these mountains. The ropes used in its formation are made of a variety of spartum or star-three grass. The river ran between high rocky banks and was thirty-six feet deep in the middle. After heavy rain it rises as much more, and has been known to attain a total depth of eighty-six feet, rendering it necessary to carry the bridge higher up the face of the mountain. In the channel of the river are enormous blocks of stone, of an entirely different description from the adjacent rocks, and evidently rolled down by the current from a higher eminence amongst the mountains.

### 4. Remarkable suspension bridge, Baron Hugel<sup>33</sup>

The road now led over a mountain, at the foot of which winds the Jelam. On the bank of river is the fort of Ghorigurh, and over against it, on the perpendicular height, is Uri Kilah; a rope bridge, or sort of ladder, is thrown over the roaring flood, stretching from the deep abyss to the mountain above. I dismounted in order to witness some men pass over this bridge, which in reality is an enterprise attended with considerable peril, it being nothing better than a thick rope twisted together, made out of horse hides. At the distance of every third foot is a loop or knot, which connects the skins together, and prevents the passenger from slipping off; but as it would be impossible to strain this material tight, he finds himself occasionally receding from the mountain across the deep abyss. On each side, however, there is another rope, about four feet above the footway, to lay hold by. In descending as well as ascending this contrivance the utmost precaution is necessary to grasp the hand ropes firmly, and to plant the foot securely on the loops or knots; the weight causing the bridge to fall from Uri as nearly perpendicularly as possible, it requires the greatest presence of mind. Its length is from 500 to 600 feet. The danger when two persons meet is not so great as might be imagined, unless they are both laden with some burden, which certainly increases the difficulty; but I need hardly say that such a bridge is incapable of bearing the weight of



any animal, though I did, to my no small astonishment, see one man carrying a sheep on his back across this frail construction.

### 5. Cane bridge, Joseph D. Hooker<sup>34</sup>

In the gorge of the Rungeet the heat was intolerable though the thermometer did not rise above 95°. The mountains leave but a narrow gorge between them, here and there bordered by a belt of strong soil, supporting a towering crop of long cane-like grasses and tall trees. The troubled river, about eighty yards across, rages along over a gravelly bed. Crossing the Rungmo, where it falls into the Rungeet, we came upon a group of natives drinking fermented Murwa liquor under a rock; I had a good deal of difficulty in getting my people past, and more in inducing one of the toppers to take the place of a Ghorka (Nepalese) of our party who was ill with fever. Soon afterwards, at a most wild and beautiful spot, I saw, for the first time, one of the most characteristic of Himalayan objects of art, *a cane bridge*. All the spurs, round the bases of which the river flowed, were steep and rocky, their flanks clothed with the richest tropical forest, their crests tipped with pines. On the river's edge, the *Banana*, *Pandanus*, and *Bauhinia*, were frequent, and *Figs* prevailed. One of the latter (of an exceedingly beautiful species) projected over the stream, growing out of a mass of rock, its roots interlaced and grasping at every available support, while its branches, loaded with deep glossy foliage, hung over the water. This tree formed one pier for the canes; that on the opposite bank was constructed of strong piles, propped with large stones; and between them swung the bridge, about eighty yards long, ever rocking over the torrent (forty feet below). The lightness and extreme simplicity of its structure were very remarkable. Two parallel canes, on the same horizontal plane, were stretched across the stream; from them others hung in loops, and along the loops were laid one or two bamboo stems for flooring; cross pieces below this flooring, hung from the two upper canes, which they thus served to keep apart. The traveller grasps one of the canes in either hand, and walks along the loose bamboos laid on the swinging loops; the motion is great, and the rattling of the loose dry bamboos is neither a musical sound, nor one calculated to inspire confidence; the whole structure seeming as if about to break down. With shoes it is not easy to walk; and even with bare feet it is often difficult, there being frequently but one bamboo, which, if the fastening is loose, tilts up, leaving the pedestrian suspended over the torrent by the slender canes. When properly and strongly made, with good fastenings, and a floor of bamboos laid *transversely*, these bridges are easy to cross. The canes are procured from a species of *Calamus*; they are as thick as the finger, and twenty or thirty yards long, knotted together, and the other pieces are fastened to them by strips of the same plant. A Lepcha, carrying one hundred and forty



pounds on his back, crosses without hesitation, slowly but steadily, and with perfect confidence.

A deep broad pool below the bridge was made available for a ferry: the boat was a triangular raft of bamboo stems, with a stage on the top, and it was secured on the opposite side of the stream, having a cane reaching across to that on which we were. A stout Lepcha leapt into the boiling flood and boldly swam across, holding on by the cane, without which he would have been carried away. He unfastened the raft, and we drew it over by the cane, and, seated on the stage up to our knees in water, we were pulled across, the raft bobbing up and down over the rippling stream.

## **6. Bridges on the Gomti, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>35</sup>**

There are two bridges over the Goomty; one of stone, which is arched, at the north end of the city, and a pontine bridge at the south. An iron bridge of three arches, 200 paces in length, which Saadut Ali caused to be brought from England in 1810, had remained, up to this time, in the cases in which it was brought. Now, however, it was at length resolved to put it up; but when the workmen came to place it together, they discovered that some of the pieces were broken, and thus the undertaking is necessarily delayed...

## **BOATS**

## **7. Sailing in a budgeroo, Mrs. Nathaniel Kindersley<sup>36</sup>**

A *budgeroo* is not much unlike a city barge; the covered part generally divided into two pretty good rooms, and an open *verander*, carrying from ten to twenty oars, and as many men, called *dandies*; the master, who steers, is called a *sarang*.

These fellows are very dextrous in their way, and seem to have the property of fishes; at least I must look upon them as amphibious animals, for the water appears to be as much their element as the land; in the passage up the river they mostly tow; but when they come to a creek, of which there are many very broad, they fasten the rope round their wastes, and, throwing themselves from the land, which is often very high, swim across, dragging the *budgeroo* after them.

When the squalls of wind and rain come on, if they can find no place to lay by, they jump into the river, and hang with their hands upon the edge of the boat, to keep it steady, with just their mouth above the water; in this manner they continue till the squall is over. The work of towing, or as it is called, tracking, is sometimes exceedingly laborious; for the banks, which, when the river is lowered, are the height of a house at least above the water, are so softened by the rains, that the *dandies* sink midleg at every step they take;



frequently large pieces of the banks give way, and by their fall boats are sunk or upset.

Sometimes they row; then it is they seem to enjoy themselves, singing all together, with great vehemence, some songs peculiar to their employment.

A family has frequently two *budgeroos*, besides boats; one of the boats is for cookery, the others for servants, provisions, furniture, and other necessities; for whenever people remove from one place to another, they are obliged to carry all these things with them, even *palenqueens*, carriages, and horses; so that the troop of attendants of every kind amounts to a great number of people.

When one chooses to dine, &c. the *budgeroo* is stopped, and the boats which are wanted come round it, and the dinner is served with as much order as on shore; it is surprising how they can cook half a dozen or more dishes, in a boat only defended from the air by a tilt made of mats.

Except in the squalls, which are frequent in the season, it is a most easy method of travelling, and, when a party of *budgeroos* go together, very agreeable.

When the *budgeroos* stop at night, the *dandies* make their fires on the shore, each *cast* by themselves, and boil their rice, which is all they live upon.

## 8. Variety of boats, William Hodges<sup>37</sup>

It being determined by the Bengal Government that it was expedient, for the public utility, that the Governor General should make a tour through a part of the country, Mr. Hastings, with that liberality and attention to the arts which has ever characterized his conduct, acceded to my request, and permitted me to accompany him.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1781, therefore, I embarked in a budgerow for this expedition...From the number of gentlemen who necessarily attended the Governor General, the fleet was very large, and consisted of every variety of the boats of the country, except those which are called *burs*, and of which we met with several in our course. These vessels are large rude barks, the sides of which are raised very high, and sewed together with the fibers of the cocoa-nut tree. They have only a single mast, with a large square sail, and the bottoms of them are nearly flat. They take in a great quantity of water from their sides and bottoms, which compels the crew to employ some people continually in bailing. They are used for the carriage of cotton, and other very bulky materials, the weight of which cannot bear any proportion of their size. Indeed, it would be impracticable to employ boats which were calculated to draw any considerable quantity of water on this river, as the navigation is extremely dangerous, from the sands being constantly shifting. I have known an island, four miles in length, and containing some villages, wholly swept away in one



season; in the mean time, at a little distance, other islands were formed, from the sands being thrown up. This phenomenon took place off the point of Rajemahel, in the year 1782.

The boats used by the natives for travelling, and also by Europeans, are the budgerows, which both sail and row: they have in general from twelve to twenty oars. These boats vary in their size according to the condition of their owners; some may be about sixty feet in length, having very high sterns; many of them twelve feet from the water's edge, and quite sharp at the upper point: in the center they broad, having a considerable bearing in the water, and quite sharp forward. They are steered with a large paddle or oar, extending ten feet from the stern; and there is generally one mast in the center, on which is hoisted a large square sail: they have likewise a topmast, on which is a square sail for fine weather. These boats are ill calculated to go near the wind, and indeed are dangerous, from the great weight abaft; they are, however, extremely commodious, having in the center a small verander, or open portico, opening by a door into a handsome room, lighted by a range of windows on each side. This is the dining or sitting room, within which is a convenient bed chamber, generally containing a small closet: the height of the sitting room is usually from seven to nine feet. Besides this boat, a gentlemen is usually attended by two others; a pulwah, for the accommodation of the kitchen, and a smaller boat, a paunchway, which is destined to convey him either on shore or on board, as it frequently happens that the budgerow cannot come close to the shores, where he might wish to land. These boats sail more expeditiously than the budgerows; but the paunchways are nearly of the same general construction, with this difference, that the greatest breadth is somewhat farther aft, and the sterns lower: the pulwabs are a broad boat, and not so sharp forward or aft as the other two. The English gentlemen have made great improvements on the budgerow in Bengal, by introducing a broad flat floor, square sterns, and broad bows. These boats are much safer, sail near and keep their wind, and there is no danger attending their taking the ground; they are, besides, calculated for carrying a greater quantity of sail. Another boat of this country, which is very curiously constructed, is called a Moor-punky: these are very long and narrow, sometimes extending to upwards of an hundred feet in length, and not more than eight feet in breadth; they are always paddled, sometimes by forty men, and are steered by a large paddle from the stern, which rises either in the shape of a peacock, a snake, or some other animal. The persons employed to paddle are directed by a man who stands up, and sometimes he makes use of a branch of a plant to direct their motions. In one part of the stern is a canopy supported by pillars, in which are seated the owner and his friends, who partake together of the refreshing breezes of the evening. These boats are very expensive, owing to the beautiful decorations of painted



and gilt ornaments, which are highly varnished, and exhibit a very considerable degree of taste.

### **9. Navigation defective, De Grandpre<sup>38</sup>**

The navigation of the Indians is still very defective. That their ships are bad is not from the want of excellent materials. The *teak* wood grows in abundance, and is equal to the oak of Europe. Their vessels are awkward in their form, and are put together with little solidity; they are scarcely even caulked; and if they were not coated with a composition made for this purpose, some of them would not be able to float. This substance is a mixture of lime and fish-oil; it adheres so closely to the planks of the ship, that it fills all the crevices, and effectually prevents the water from penetrating. It is called by the Indians *galgat*.

They have another preparation, called *sarangousti*, which they spread over the heads of the nails and joints of the timbers. It is made of dry pitch and fish-oil, which are beaten together till the mixture assumes the consistency of a soft paste; in this state it is applied, and it gives such extraordinary hardness as to turn the edge of the best tempered instruments. These two compositions cannot be too strongly recommended to European mariners.

The Indian vessels are called *parias*. If their hull be defective, the manner of rigging them is not less so. The masts are of teak, and are extremely heavy; the ropes are of cocoa-hair, which they call *kaire*; and they have few blocks and sails. Accordingly, though some of the vessels are so large as to amount even to six hundred tons, they are only adapted for short voyages, which they accomplish with the aid of the monsoons. They are sufficiently numerous to perform the whole carrying business between the coast and Bengal. Their usual cargo is salt and rice. The greater navigation, from coast to coast, is made by vessels of European construction.

### **10. Catamarans and masoolla boats in Madras, Honoria Lawrence<sup>39</sup>**

The water was perfectly speckled with boats of which catamarans chiefly attracted my attention as being most novel. Three logs of wood are lashed together, the middle one is rather longer than the other two, and a little turned up at one end. A raft is thus formed, which barely floats, so that at a little distance it is not visible above the surface, and the men appear sitting on the water. Some catamarans had only one rower, but most had two...

The catamaran is moved by a long broad thin paddle, rounded at each end, and held by the middle; the rowers sit face to face, in a kneeling position resting on their heels, so as to show the soles of the feet, which, as well as the palms of the hands, are white. Sometimes when the raft itself was not seen, it was amusing to observe the men, apparently squatting on the water, and



brandishing the paddles at one another. They row by sticking rapidly first at one side, then at the other. These men brought fruit for sale in large flat baskets, made of bark. How these are kept dry is more than I know, for when I was afterwards going through the surf, I saw men and cargoes and all, washed clean off. But such a trifle seemed to cause these amphibious beings no manner of inconvenience. Their hands soon reappeared above the surf, they swam about, regained the catamaran, and plied their paddle as if nothing had happened. I am told that sharks are rarely found within the line of surf; were it otherwise the poor boat men would have little chance of their lives.

The *masoolla* boats are almost equally curious, they are shaped much like half the rind of a melon, only more concave and the end more pointed upwards. They are formed of planks sewn together with cord made of coco-nut bark, and are caulked with the same, without any metal being used in the construction. There are bars or rather branches of trees, laid across the top, the men sit on one and rest their feet on the next. The oars are merely long pliant boughs, with a broad piece of wood tied to one and all together looking like ill proportioned malt shovels. These play in ropes, by which they are tied to the gunwale. The accommodation boats, intended for passengers, have one end planked, cushioned seats and an awning over head. At the stern a man stands, steering by means of a long oar, likewise tied to its place. Thus the whole make is of the rudest kind, and appeared particularly uncouth after the neat shape and high finish of an English vessel, but the wood and fastenings of the *masoolla* boats are all so pliant and elastic that it yields to the wave and lives, where a boat of ours would founder.

### **11. Sails of country boats, Honoria Lawrence<sup>40</sup>**

You would be astonished what absolute rags are the sails of country boats, and still more so that these tatters do carry along the vessel. Except in boats that are partly of European build, the bamboo is one of the chief materials, forming masts, helms, oars, spars, anchors. If there be no wind, we track by a rope fastened to the mast and pulled by a set of the *dandees* [boatmen], who walk on the bank. Sometimes they are obliged to go through the water, and even to swim a considerable distance. They seem to feel neither heat nor moisture and they roll about in the river, their grinning black faces appearing above the water...

We sail or track along until sunset, when we lie to, close to shore, and anchor, or rather *lagao*. This is: several ropes are put out from the boat, each having at the end a strong bamboo stake which is driven into the ground, and so we are secured for the night.



## 12. Boatmen or *dandees*, Honoria Lawrence<sup>41</sup>

We are, on board, about forty souls, ourselves, our servants, the *manjee* (commander) and crew. The boatmen are called *dandees*, from *dand*, an oar, and the profession is followed by both Hindus and Mussulmanns. Our men are dark, spare and active, most of them young, for their work does not favour long life. They wear mainly a waist-cloth and small skull cap of white or coloured cotton. The *manjee* is in no way distinguished from those under him, except that instead of pulling the ropes, he steers and gives orders, which he delivers in a sort of loud, prolonged chant audible at a good distance....

They [the *dandees*] are all a most loquacious race, and their chief pleasure seems to be smoking a "*hubble-bubble*" or pipe, a cocoa-nut shell or small hollow globe of wood which has a long tube inserted at the upper part, with a little earthen saucer on the top, where the lighted tobacco is placed. The globe is fitted with water and from one side of it projects another tube, to which the mouth is applied and thus the smoke is inhaled through the water. The *hubble-bubble* is the chief refreshment of all the hard working classes, as the *hookah* is the grand recreation of the idle.

## 13. A description of the experimental trip made by the *Hooghly steamer to Allahabad in 1828*<sup>42</sup>

She left Coolie Bazar soon after daylight on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1828, stowed with coals on deck and below, to the extent of about 40 tons, at a draught of water exceeding any at which she had been previously tried under steam. On the 11<sup>th</sup> at noon she passed Berhampore, and on 12<sup>th</sup>, entered the great river, and anchored at sunset at about 8 miles from the Sooty mouth of the Bhagiretty. Here, we understand, considerable difficulty was experienced in steering the vessel owing to the eddies and whirlpools, which at this season are so frequent. The inconvenience was afterwards overcome by using a rudder made on board after the plan of the native boats. Her first supply of coal was taken in at Rajmahal which reached on the 13<sup>th</sup> in the evening, leaving it again on the 14<sup>th</sup> at day light and arriving on the 20<sup>th</sup> Patna, where she remained one day, and having received a fresh supply of coals, proceeded on and arrived a little after noon of the 27<sup>th</sup> at Benares. Here it was suggested that many of the higher class of natives would be highly gratified by seeing the vessel manoeuvre, and she was accordingly steamed up to the western extremity of the city, returned and anchored; the tops of the houses, the minarets, the ghats, and the whole banks of the river were lined with natives eagerly gazing at the novel spectacle. Many natives of distinctions visited the *Hooghly*, and were highly pleased and astonished with the explanations they received as to the power which enabled her, unaided by sails or oars, to make her way against wind and tide, and rapt in wonder at the extraordinary effects it could produce. The



*Hoogly* left Benares on the 28<sup>th</sup>, and arrived at Allahabad on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant, a few hours after daylight. She remained there until the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This day being fixed for her departure, several gentlemen repaired on board at daylight to witness a display of her powers. The vessel was got under way and steamed a couple of miles up the Jumna. On her return off the Fort, where she had to wait for her pilot, a message was received from Doorjun Sal expressing his desire to visit the vessel. Having obtained the requisite permission he came on board accordingly, attended by a guard and accompanied by his son, a smart intelligent lad; they examined the vessel very minutely, asking a great many questions and appearing much delighted with what they saw and heard.





## **Laws, Justice and Crimes**

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- A. Legal System of Hindus**
- B. Some indigenous forms of seeking redress**
- C. Indigenous institutions of dispensing justice – the panchayats**
- D. Impact of British judicial system**
- E. Thuggee**

### **A. LEGAL SYSTEM OF HINDUS**

#### **1. Legal Codes comparable to Digest of Justinian, William Robertson<sup>1</sup>**

That the Hindoos were a people highly civilised, at the time when their laws were composed, is most clearly established by internal evidence contained in the Code [compilation of ancient texts under the instructions of Warren Hastings] itself. Among nations beginning to emerge from barbarism, the regulations of law are extremely simple, and applicable only to a few obvious cases of daily occurrence. Men must have been long united in a social state, their transactions must have been numerous and complex, and judges must have determined an immense variety of controversies to which these give rise, before the system of law becomes so voluminous and comprehensive as to direct the judicial proceedings of a nation far advanced in improvement. In that early age of the Roman republic when the laws of the Twelve Tables were promulgated, nothing more was required than the laconic injunctions which they contain for regulating the decisions of courts of justice; but, in a later period, the body of civil law, ample as its contents are, was found hardly sufficient for that purpose. To the jejune brevity of the Twelve Tables, the Hindoo code has no resemblance; but with respect to the number and variety of points it considers, it will bear a comparison with the celebrated Digest of



Justinian, or with the systems of jurisprudence in nations most highly civilised. The articles, of which the Hindoo Code is composed, are arranged in natural and luminous order. They are numerous and comprehensive, and investigated with that minute attention and discernment which are natural to a people distinguished for acuteness and subtilty of understanding, who have been long accustomed to the accuracy of judicial proceedings, and acquainted with all the refinements of legal practice. The decisions concerning every point (with a few exceptions occasioned by local prejudices and peculiar customs) are founded upon the great and immutable principles of justice, which the human mind acknowledges and respects, in every age, and in all parts of the earth. Whoever examines the whole work, cannot entertain a doubt of its containing the jurisprudence of an enlightened and commercial people. Whoever looks into any particular title, will be surprised with a minuteness of detail and nicety of distinction, which, in many instances, seem to go beyond the attention of European legislation; and it is remarkable, that some of the regulations which indicate the greatest degree of refinement, were established in periods of the most remote antiquity.

[William Jones's Third Discourse] "In the first of the sacred law tracts, (as is observed by a person to whom Oriental literature, in all its branches, has been greatly indebted,) which the Hindoos suppose to have been revealed by Menu, some millions of years ago, there is a curious passage on the legal interest of money, and the limited rate of it in different cases, with an exception in regard to adventures at sea; an exception which the sense of mankind approves, and which commerce absolutely requires, though it was not before the reign of Charles I that our English jurisprudence fully admitted it in respect of maritime contracts." It is likewise worthy of notice, that though the natives of India have been distinguished in every age for the humanity and mildness of their disposition, yet such is the solicitude of their lawgivers to preserve the order and tranquility of society, that the punishments which they inflict on criminals are (agreeably to an observation of the ancients already mentioned) extremely rigorous. [Code] "Punishment (according to a striking personification in the Hindoo Code) is the magistrate; punishment is the inspirer of terror; punishment is the nourisher of the subjects; punishment is the defender from calamity; punishment is the guardian of those that sleep; punishment, with a black aspect and a red eye, terrifies the guilty."

## **2. Political institutions blended with the idea of religion, Robert Orme<sup>2</sup>**

Although the notion of absolute power admits of nothing which can be sanctified from its grasp, whence the king, as in other despotic States, may, if he pleases, become heir to any man in his kingdom: yet custom has not



established this right to him in Indostan; and these perhaps are the reasons why neither the Moors or Gentoos have been subjected to it.

1. All the political institutions of the Gentoos are so blended with the idea of religion, that this is generally effected where these are concerned. The softness of manners which these people receive from the climate, has fixed all their attention to the solaces of a domestic life. There are not more tender parents, or better masters, in the world: such a people will make wills in favour of their offspring: and the prince finds himself restrained by policy from establishing a right so utterly shocking to the nature and disposition of the subject. He is likewise restrained by religion: the name of God invoked in the testament of a Gentoo, gives it as sacred an authority as with those who have better notions of a deity; and the Brachman is too much interested, as father of a family, to sanctify a practice which would affect his own property. Thus the Gentoo princes were never seen to assert this right, excepting when avarice had got so far the ascendant, as not only to confound all their notions of policy, but even to make them look on religion as the prejudice of education.
2. The Moors, in the first outrages of conquest, doubtless possessed themselves of all kinds of property: but when the Gentoos would not be converted, and were left to the observance of their own rites, the right of testaments was continued, and still subsists amongst them. The Gentoos, by their subtilty and application, find many means of gaining wealth under the Moors; and this wealth they devolve by will to their male children. The obstacles which these may meet with in taking possession, will be explained hereafter.
3. The idea of being fellow-conquerors; the complacency arising from perpetual victories; the immense wealth which these conquests afforded; might have been the causes which prevented the first Mahomedan princes of Indostan, from establishing amongst those of their own religion, this utmost effort of absolute power. They were contented with knowing that they had at all times the power to seize, without declaring that they intended to inherit every man's property.
4. When the kingdom came to be divided into distinct provinces; when many of these provinces rendered their Nabobs almost independent of the throne; it would have been the height of impolicy to have attempted such an institution; it would have been impossible to have effected it.
5. Had the throne attempted such violence upon such subjects as were more immediately within its reach, the next province, or, if not that, one beyond it, would have afforded an asylum, where a part of the persecuted wealth, bestowed with address, could not fail to procure



safety and protection to the remainder; especially if the heirs, as they doubtlessly would, took sanctuary with princes, who either were dissatisfied with, or disregarded, the authority of the court: hence confusions and revolts may be strengthened, if not produced.

6. ...The different methods of inheritance amongst the Gentoos, are settled by their religion, according to the different casts by which they are distinguished. In general, the females are recommended to the care of the brothers; and these are commonly ordered to divide equally: sometimes first cousins, especially if born under the same roof, share equally with the brothers: sometimes the first wife of the deceased is intrusted with the management of the whole estate during life – a custom attended with no consequences prejudicial to the children, as she cannot enter into a second marriage. It is always recommended by the parent, that the house, if in a way of trade, be not divided; and as surely it happens, that divisions ensure amongst the heirs.

### **3. Gentoos left to follow their laws by Tartars, Robert Orme<sup>3</sup>**

...There are no digests or codes of laws existing in Indostan: the Tartars who conquered this country could scarcely read or write and when they found it impossible to convert them to Mahomedanism, left the Gentoos at liberty to follow their own religion...

### **4. Oppression prevails, Robert Orme<sup>4</sup>**

Imitation has conveyed the unhappy system of oppression which prevails in the government of Indostan throughout all ranks of the people, from the highest even to the lowest subject of the empire. Every head of a village calls his habitation the Durbar, and plunders of their meal and roots the wretches of his precinct: from him the Zemindar extorts the small pittance of silver, which his penurious tyranny has scraped together; the Phousdar seizes upon the greatest share of the Zemindar's collections, and then secures the favour of his Nabob by voluntary contributions, which leave him not possessed of the half of his rapines and exactions: the Nabob fixes his rapacious eye on every portion of wealth which appears in his province, and never fails to carry off part of it: by large deductions from these acquisitions, he purchases security from his superiors, or maintains it against them at the expense of a war.

Subject to such oppressions, property in Indostan is seldom seen to descend to the third generation.



## B. SOME INDIGENOUS FORMS OF SEEKING REDRESS

### 1. *Dharna*, John Shore<sup>5</sup>

The inviolability of a Brahmin is a fixed principle of the Hindus; and to deprive him of life, either by direct violence, or by causing his death in any mode, is a crime which admits of no expiation. To this principle may be traced the practice called *Dharna*, which was formerly familiar at Benares, and may be translated Caption or Arrest. It is used by the Brahmins in that city, to gain a point which cannot be accomplished by any other means; and the process is as follows:

The Brahmin who adopts this expedient for the purpose mentioned, proceeds to the door or house of the person against whom it is directed, or wherever he may most conveniently intercept him: he there sets down in *Dharna*, with poison or a poignard, or some other instrument of suicide in his hand, and threatening to use it if his adversary should attempt to molest or pass him, he thus completely arrests him. In this situation the Brahmin fasts; and by the rigor of the etiquette, which is rarely infringed, the unfortunate object of his arrest ought also to fast; and thus they both remain until the institutor of the *Dharna* obtains satisfaction. In this, as he seldom makes the attempt without resolution to preserve, he rarely fails; for if the party thus arrested were to suffer the Brahmin sitting in *Dharna* to perish by hunger, the sin would for ever lie upon his head. This practice has been less frequent of late years, since the institution of the Court of Justice at Benares in 1783; but the interference of that Court, and even that of the Resident there, has occasionally proved insufficient to check it; as it has been deemed in general most prudent to avoid for this purpose the use of coercion, from an apprehension that the first appearance of it might drive the sitter in *Dharna* to suicide. The discredit of the act would not only fall upon the officers of justice, but upon the government itself.

### 2. Maratha chiefs were frequently subject to the pressure of *dharna* from their soldiers. Thomas D. Broughton, who spent a year at the camp of Daulat Rao Sindhia in 1809, observed this practice<sup>6</sup>

The pecuniary distresses into which Seendhiya is plunged and which, no doubt, I shall have many opportunities of recounting to you, sometimes place him in the most ridiculous situations, for a reigning prince, that it is possible to conceive. A few days ago a man called upon me on the part of two *Khans*, with whom I had some acquaintance, and who command a large *Risalu* in the Muha Raj's service. He informed me that, as usual, his masters were in the utmost distress for money; being driven to the necessity of borrowing it, for their daily expenses, at the ruinous rate of *five per cent* per



month! He stated their claims upon the Muha Raj to amount to nearly seven lakhs of rupees: and added, that if they could not get their accounts settled immediately, they meant to go the next day and sit *dhurna* at his tents. This curious mode of enforcing a demand is in universal practice among the Mahrattas: Seendhiya himself not being exempt from it. The man who sits the *dhurna*, goes to the house or tent of him whom he wishes to bring to terms; and remains there till the affair is settled: during which time the one under restraint is confined to his apartment, and not suffered to communicate with any persons but those whom the other may approve of. The laws by which the *dhurna* is regulated are as well defined and understood as those of any other custom whatever. When it is meant to be very strict, the claimant carries a number of his followers, who surround the tent, sometimes even the bed, of his adversary, and deprive him altogether of food; in which case, however, etiquette prescribes the same abstinence to himself: the strongest stomach of course carries the day. A custom of this kind was once so prevalent in the province and city of Benares, that Brahmuns were trained to remain a long time without food. They were sent to the door of some rich individual; where they made a vow to remain without eating, till they should obtain a certain sum of money. To preserve the life of a Brahmun is so absolutely a duty, that the money was generally paid; but never till a good struggle had taken place to ascertain whether the man was staunch or not: for money is the life and soul of all Hindoos. In this camp there are many Brahmuns, who hire themselves out to sit *dhurna* for those, who do not like to expose themselves to so great an inconvenience.

**3. The practice of *kur*, whereby a pile of wood was erected, on which a cow, calf or old woman was placed and it was announced that the pile would be set on fire unless the grievance was redressed; John Shore recorded an instance of *kur* in Benaras in 1788 by three Brahmins<sup>7</sup>**

Their own explanation is summarily this: That they held lands in partnership with others, but that the public assessment was unequally imposed upon them; as their partners paid less, whilst they were charged with more than their due proportion; they therefore refused to discharge any part of the revenues whatever, and erected a *Koor* to intimate the government's officers from making any demand upon them. Their sole object, as they explicitly declared, was to obtain an equal distribution of the public assessment between themselves and their partners.

**4. *Traga* or self-infliction, Marianne Postans<sup>8</sup>**

[Some castes perform] what is called *Traga*, or a self-infliction, which



compels the victim's debtor to make good his obligations; or any one to redress an injury he may have committed against him. The form of Traga, in common use, is made by pushing a spear blade through both cheeks, and in this state dancing before the person against whom Traga is made. This is borne on all occasions without a symptom of pain, which if displayed would destroy its efficacy.

### **C. INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS OF DISPENSING JUSTICE – THE PANCHAYATS**

#### **1. Thomas Munro regarded trial by panchayats as the most effective means of granting justice; he observed that trial by panchayats was generally popular among the natives and regarded fair and legal<sup>9</sup>**

No native thinks that justice is done where it [the panchayat] is not adopted; and in appeals of causes formerly settled, whether under a native government or under that of the Company, previous to the establishment of the Courts, the reason assigned in almost every instance was that the decision was not given by a panchayat, but by a public officer, or by persons acting under his influence or sitting in his presence. The native who has a good cause always applies for a panchayat; while he who has a bad one, seeks the decision of a Collector or a Judge, because he knows that it is easier to deceive them...

The defects of the punchayet are better known to the natives than to us; yet with all its defects they hold it in so much reverence, that they say, where the punj sits God is present. In many ordinary cases the punchayet is clear and prompt in its decision, but when complicated accounts are to be examined, it is often extremely dilatory. It adjourns frequently; when it meets again some of the members are often absent, and it sometimes happens that a substitute takes the place of an absent member...

[Munro was confident that these irregularities could be rectified and even otherwise did not cause half the inconveniences of English courts. He felt the British should employ the panchayats more than hitherto because their duties] are of the most essential advantage to the community, and there is no other possible way by which they can be so well discharged... We ought to avail ourselves of their aid, by extending the range within which the operations of the punchayet are now confined. Its cognizance of all suits, within a certain amount, both in the Zillah and district Moonsiff's courts, should be abolished, and neither party should have the option of declining its jurisdiction.



**2. Mountstuart Elphinstone, in his *Report of the Territories Conquered From The Paishwa in 1821*, noted the importance of panchayats in Maratha territory<sup>10</sup>**

The Punchayet may...be considered as the great instrument in the administration of justice...the decision of a Punchayet was always respected, as the proverbial expression of *Panch Parmeshwar*, (A punchayet is God Almighty) fully testifies...It was [with the help of panchayats]...that ordinary disputes were settled. Those about boundaries, which were extremely frequent, (except in Candeish) were settled by a Punchayet, composed of Daishmooks, Daispandies, Patails and Coolcurnees, assisted by the Mahrs of the disputing villages, who are the established guardians of land marks and boundaries....Disputes about cast were settled by the cast unless when a complaint of unjust expulsion took place when the Government ordered a Punchayet of responsible persons of the cast from an unprejudiced part of the country....

[Whatever the defects of the panchayat system, under it the Maratha country flourished], and the people seem to have been exempted from some of the evils which exist under our more perfect Government...The advantage of this [system] was particularly felt among the lower order, who are most out of reach of their rulers, and most apt to be neglected under all Governments. By means of the Punchayet they were enabled to effect a tolerable dispensation of justice among themselves...

A Patail was restrained from exercising oppression, both by the fear of the Mamlutdar and by the inconvenience of offending the society in which he lived, and when both parties were disposed to a Punchayet, he had no interest in refusing his assistance to assemble one. A Punchayet can scarcely be perplexed in the simple causes that arise under its own eyes, nor can it easily give a corrupt decision when all the neighbours know the merits of the case. Defendants, witnesses and members are all within the narrow compass of a village, and where all are kept from earning their daily bread during the discussion, there is not likely to be much needless complaint or affected delay.

This branch of the Native system, therefore, is excellent for the settlement of the disputes of the Ryots among themselves, but it is of no use in protecting them from the oppression of their superiors, and it is evident that the plan of leaving the people to themselves could never have been sufficient for that purpose. But here another principle comes into operation. The whole of the Government revenue being deprived from the Ryot, it was the obvious interest of Government and the agents to protect him, and prevent his being exposed to any exactions but their own. The exactions of Government were limited in good times by the conviction, that the best way to enrich itself was to spare the Ryots; and those of its agents by the common interest of Government, and



the Ryots in restraining their depredation. By these principles, while the Native Government was good, its Ryots were tolerably protected both from the injustice of their neighbours, and tyranny of their superiors, and that class is the most numerous, most important, and most deserving portion of the community...

The Punchayet itself, although in all but village causes it had the defects before ascribed to it, possessed many advantages. Though each might be slow, the number that could sit at a time even under the superintendence of one person, must have enabled them to decide many causes. The intimate acquaintance of the members with the subject in dispute, and in many cases with the characters of the parties, must have made their decisions frequently correct; and it was an advantage of incalculable value in that mode of trial that the judges, being drawn from the body of the people could act on no principles that were not generally understood; a circumstance which by preventing uncertainty and obscurity in the law, struck at the very root of litigation. The liability of Punchayets to corruption was checked by the circumstance, that it did not so frequently happen to one man to be a member as to make venality very profitable, while the parties and the members being of his own class, he was much exposed to detection and loss of character: accordingly the Punchayets appear, even after the corrupt reign of BAJEE ROW, to have retained in a great degree the confidence of the people, and they do not appear to have been unworthy of their good opinion. All the answers to my queries (except those of the collector of Ahmednugger) give them a very favourable character, and Mr. CHAPLIN in particular is of opinion that in most instances their statement of the evidence is succinct and clear, their reasoning on it solid and perspicuous, and their decision, in a plurality of cases, just and impartial.

Their grand defect was procrastination, and to counteract it the suitors had recourse to the same remedies as with people in power, importunity, intercession of patrons, and sometimes no doubt to promises, fees and bribes.

**3. Popularity of panchayats, John Malcolm [Agent to the Governor General for the Affairs of Malwa from January 1818 to December 1821] <sup>11</sup>**

Courts of Punjayet are common to all the Native States of India; their exact shape and form vary; but every where the principles upon which they are founded are nearly the same. The rules of these Courts are much more flexible than is easily reconcilable to our improved system of jurisprudence; but this, in states so liable to changes in their administration as those to which this constitution belongs, is an advantage: it facilitates resort to them at any period, and under all circumstances they are a corrective to power, and a benefit



to the people...Punjayet courts of arbitration so obviously depend upon character, that they can have no existence but in the general impression in favour of the individuals of whom they are composed. They may indeed be viewed as created by public opinion, and this accounts for the Members paying their chief court to that as the source of reputation; but history gives us the most conclusive evidence regarding these Punjayet courts. Among the despotic Princes of India they have been frequent or otherwise, as these have been just or oppressive: when violence prevailed, they have been altogether discontinued; and it is singularly illustrative of this institution, that the most artful and tyrannical chiefs have never been able to employ them in aid of their oppression. The character of Punjayet courts, however, is best understood from the general sentiment of the whole of the unprotected part of the community of India in their favor; they are associated with every idea they have of justice, nor can they, while in their present condition, both as to knowledge and order of society, be ever brought to appreciate more artificial and improved Systems of jurisprudence...

The Punjayet Courts, with all their advantages, have many and serious defects...

...it is, I believe, now very generally admitted, that this system requires great modification, if not alterations; and there can be no doubt, that the partial establishment even of Punjayet Courts would not only be most popular with our Native subjects, but tend beyond all other Institutions to lay deep the foundation of our power, by associating with our administration of justice the most respectable of our subjects....

In small towns and villages, the Punchayet is composed of men of certain offices, classes, and character. These courts, however, can never become an efficient part of the British jurisprudence without a considerable change in their constitution, forms, and proceedings. The reasons are obvious; the same classes of men do not fill the same places in society, under our government, as they did under a Native prince; nor are men actuated by similar motives.

Our administration, though just, is cold and rigid. If it creates no alarm, it inspires little, if any, emulation. The people are protected, but not animated or attached. It is rare that any native of India living under it can suffer injury or wrong; but still more rare that he can be encouraged or elevated by favour or distinction. Our rules and regulations constitute a despotic power, which is alike imperative upon the governors and the governed. Its character compels it to generalize, and its forms, as well as principles, are unyielding. To engraft upon this system an institution such as the Punchayet is no easy task; but if satisfied of its excellence, we should not be deterred from its introduction by any difficulties of our own creation...



## **D. IMPACT OF BRITISH JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

- 1. W. H. Sleeman, who served in the Sagar and Nerbudda territories from 1820, and was later Resident at Gwalior [1843-1849] and at Lucknow [1849-1856], on the difference between native and English courts<sup>12</sup>**

I believe that as little falsehood is spoken by the people of India, in their village communities, as in any part of the world with an equal area and population. It is in our courts of justice where falsehoods prevail most, and the longer they have been anywhere established, the greater the degree of falsehood that prevails in them. Those entrusted with the administration of a newly-acquired territory are surprised to find the disposition among both principals and witnesses in cases to tell the plain and simple truth. As magistrates, they find it very often difficult to make thieves and robbers tell lies, according to the English fashion, to avoid running a risk of criminating themselves. In England, this habit of making criminals tell lies arose from the severity of the penal code, which made the punishment so monstrously disproportionate to the crime, that the accused, however clear and notorious his crimes, became an object of general sympathy. In India, punishments have nowhere been, under our rule, disproportionate to the crimes; on the contrary, they have generally been more mild than the people would wish them to be, or think they ought to be, in order to deter from similar crimes; and, in newly-acquired territories, they have generally been more mild than in our old possessions. The accused are, therefore, nowhere considered as objects of public sympathy; and in newly-acquired territories they are willing to tell the truth, and are allowed to do so, in order to save the people whom they have injured, and their neighbors generally, the great loss and annoyance unavoidably attending upon a summons to our courts.

In the native courts, to which ours succeed, the truth was seen through immediately, the judges who presided could commonly distinguish truth from falsehood in the evidence before them, almost as well as the sylvan gods who sat in the pipal or cotton-trees; though they were seldom supposed by the people to be quite so just in their decisions. When we take possession of such countries, they, for a time at least, give us credit for the same sagacity, with a little more integrity. The prisoner knows that his neighbors expect him to tell the truth to save them trouble, and will detest him if he does not; he supposes that we shall have the sense to find out the truth whether he tells it or not, and then humanity to visit his crime with the punishment it merits, and no more.

The magistrate asks the prisoner what made him steal; and the prisoner enters at once into an explanation of the circumstances which reduced him to the necessity of doing so, and offers to bring witnesses to prove them; but



never dreams of offering to bring witnesses to prove that he did not steal, if he really had done so; because the general feeling would be in favour of his doing the one, and against his doing the other.

## **2. Testimony of natives in British courts, W.H. Sleeman<sup>13</sup>**

There is, I believe, no class of men in India from whom it is more difficult to get the true statement of a case pending before a court than the sepoys of our native regiments; and yet there are, I believe, no people in the world from whom it is more easy to get it in their own village communities, where they state it before their relations, elders, and neighbors, whose esteem is necessary to their happiness, and can be obtained only by adherence to truth. Every case that comes before a regimental court involves, or is supposed to involve, the interest or feelings of someone or other of their companions and the question which the deponent asks himself is – not what religion, public justice, the interests of discipline and order, or the wishes of his officers require, or what would appear manly and honourable before the elders of his own little village, but what will secure the esteem, and what will excite the hatred, of his comrades. This will often be downright, deliberate falsehood, sworn upon the Koran or the Ganges water before his officers.

Many a brave sepoy have I seen faint away from the agitated state of his feelings, under the dread of the Deity if he told lies with the Ganges water in his hands, and of his companions if he told the truth, and caused them to be punished. Every question becomes a party question, and the 'point of honour' requires that every witness shall tell as many lies about it as possible. When I go into a village, and talk with the people in any part of India, I know that I shall get the truth out of them on all subjects as long as I can satisfy them that I am not come on the part of the Government to inquire into the value of their fields with a view to new impositions, and this I can always do; but, when I go among the sepoys to ask about anything, I feel pretty sure that I have little chance of getting at the truth; they will take the alarm and try to deceive me, lest what I learn should be brought up at some future day against them or their comrades. The Duke of Wellington says, speaking of the English soldiers: 'It is most difficult to convict a prisoner before a regimental court-martial, for, I am sorry to say, that soldiers have little regard to the oath administered to them; and the officers who are sworn well and truly to try and determine *according to the evidence*, the matter before them have too much regard to the strict *letter* of that administered to them.' Again: 'The witnesses being in almost every instance common soldiers, whose conduct this tribunal was instituted to control, the consequence is that perjury is almost as common an offence as drunkenness and plunder, etc.'



### 3. W.H. Sleeman on how natives attributed declining fertility of the soil to perjury that was encouraged by English courts<sup>14</sup>

On the 14th (January 1836) we came on ten miles to Kosi, for the most part over a poor soil badly cultivated, and almost exclusively devoted to autumn crops, of which cotton is the principal. I lost the road in the morning before daylight, and the trooper, who usually rode with me, had not come up. I got an old landholder from one of the villages to walk on with me a mile, and put me in the right road. I asked him what had been the state of the country under the former government of the Jats and Marathas, and was told that the greater part was a wild jungle. 'I remember,' said the old man, 'when you could not have got out of the road hereabouts without a good deal of risk. I could not have ventured a hundred yards from the village without the chance of having my clothes stripped off my back. Now, the whole face of the country is under cultivation, and the roads are safe; formerly the government kept no faith with their landholders and cultivation, exacting ten rupees where they had bargained for five, whenever they found the crops good; but, in spite of all this "zulm" (oppression), said the old man, 'there was then more "barkat" (blessings from above) than now. The lands yielded more returns to the cultivator, and he could maintain his little family better upon five acres than he can now upon ten.'

'To what, my old friend, do you attribute this very unfavorable change in the productive powers of your soil?'

'A man cannot, sir, venture to tell the truth at all times, and in all places,' said he.

'You may tell it now with safety, my good old friend; I am a mere traveller ("musafir") going to the hills in search of health, from the valley of the Nerbudda, where the people have been suffering much from blight, and are much perplexed in their endeavour to find a cause.'

'Here, sir, we all attribute these evils to the dreadful system of *perjury*, which the practices of your judicial courts have brought among the people. You are perpetually putting the Ganges water into the hands of the Hindoos, and the Koran into those of Mohammedans; and all kinds of lies are every day told upon them. God Almighty can stand this no longer; and the lands have ceased to be blessed with that fertility which they had before this sad practice began. This, sir, is almost the only fault we have, any of us, to find with your government; men, by this system of perjury, are able to cheat each other out of their rights, and bring down sterility upon the land, by which the innocent are made to suffer for the guilty.'

On reaching our tents, I asked a respectable farmer, who came to pay his respects to the Commissioner of the division, Mr. Fraser, what he thought of the matter, telling him what I had heard from my old friend on the road. 'The diminished fertility is,' said he, 'owing, no doubt, to the want of those salutary



fallows which the fields got under former governments, when invasions and civil wars were things of common occurrence, and kept at least two thirds of the land waste; but there is, on the other hand, no doubt, that you have encouraged perjury a good deal in your courts of justice; and this perjury must have some effect in depriving the land of the blessing of God. Every man now, who has a cause in your civil courts, seems to think it necessary either to swear falsely himself, or to get others to do it for him. The European gentlemen, no doubt, do all they can to secure every man his right, but, surrounded as they are by perjured witnesses, and corrupt native officers, they commonly labour in the dark.'

Much of truth is to be found among the village communities of India, where they have been carefully maintained, if people will go among them to seek it. Here, as almost everywhere else, truth is the result of self-government, whether arising from choice, under municipal institutions, or necessity, under despotism and anarchy; self-government produces self-esteem and pride of character.

## **E. CRIMES**

### **THE PHENOMENON OF THUGGEE**

#### **1. Initiation ceremony of a Thug, Philip Meadows Taylor<sup>15</sup>**

The day after my adventure with the tiger, I left our village with my father. We travelled on horseback, and on the fourth morning afterwards reached Sheepoor, the town from which the grand expedition was to set out. It was here too, that I was to be admitted into the band of Thugs, and I looked forward to my inauguration with much impatience, and perhaps some dread for I knew not what ceremonies I had to go through. We put up in the house of Moedeem, where several other Thug leaders were also; and after refreshing ourselves, my father bid me accompany him to the council which was to determine on the future operations. I was presented to the members, ten in number, who were the jemadars of the different bands. I could see, from the respect and consideration with which my father was treated, that he was looked upon as the chief of the whole; I was gratified by the reception I met with, and my conduct in the affair with the tiger, the whole circumstances of which were related by my father, raised me at once to a high station in their respect.

#### **Wait for Dussehra**

As it still wanted two days of the festival of Dussehra, my inauguration was postponed to that day, for it is esteemed a particularly fortunate one by



the Thugs, and indeed by all classes. On it, you are already aware, that all great undertakings are commenced by armies, and in like manner by us Thugs, for the breaking up of the rains gives a hope that the adventure will not be impeded by them; and the continuance of fine weather which follows it, allows the band to travel in comfort, and with better hope of booty from the chance of falling in with travellers, who also take advantage of the break in the weather to commence long journeys.

### **Why Bhawani sacred for Muslims**

Above all, it is a day peculiarly sacred to Bhowanee, our patroness and goddess. Still, being a Moosulman, I could not then see why such respect was paid to the festival of the Dusera or indeed why it was kept at all; and I applied to my father for a solution of my doubts on the subject.

"It is necessary to your fully understanding this," said he, "that I should give you an outline of our belief in the Divine origin of our profession, which is intimately connected with the faith of the Hindoos, and by whom we Moosulmans have been instructed in the art of Thuggee."

"This is wonderful indeed," said I; "how do you reconcile any connection between the faith of unbelievers and that of the blessed prophet?"

"I cannot pretend to solve the difficulty," said my father; "but as their relation is far more ancient than ours, and no doubt had a Divine origin, there are many points in it which one of the true faith may follow without offence, so that he does not join them in all their forms and profession. Indeed, this is impossible, as no one can become a Hindoo; but, as I told you before, Thuggee is one of the means by which Alla works out his own ends; and as the profession of it has been handed down to us from ages, and becomes the fate of those who are called to follow it, there is no possibility of avoiding the profession though one desired to do so; and, as a direct consequence, no sin in associating with Hindoos in the practice of it, from whom it has had its origin. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," said I; "it was not to question its propriety that I asked the question, but only to know how it was that Hindoo festivals were acknowledged and kept by us Moosulmans."

"The Dusera is the only one," said my father, "which is observed; and the reason of this is, that it is the fittest time of the year to commence our enterprises, and has been invariably kept sacred by all Hindoo Thugs. But I must tell you of the origin of Thuggee, that you may judge for yourself how ancient it is, and how well the instructions then given by Divine command have been followed up. In the beginning of the world, according to the Hindoos, there existed a creating and destroying power, both emanations from the Supreme Being. These were, as a matter of consequence, at constant enmity



with each other which still continues. The creative power, however, peopled the earth so fast, that the destroyer could not keep pace with him, nor was he allowed to do so; but was given permission to resort to every means he could devise to effect his objects. Among others, his consort Devee, Bhowanee, or Kalee, for she is known under these names and many others, constructed an image, into which, on this occasion, she was empowered to infuse the breath of life. No sooner was this effected, than she assembled a number of her votaries, whom she named Thugs. She instructed them in the art of Thuggee; and to prove its efficacy, with her own hands destroyed before them the image she had made, in the manner which we now practise. She endowed the Thugs with superior intelligence and cunning, in order that they might decoy human beings to destruction, and sent them abroad into the world, giving them, as the reward of their exertions, the plunder they might obtain from those they put to death, and bidding them be under no concern for the disposal of the bodies, as she would herself convey them from the earth. Ages passed on in this manner, and she protected her votaries from human laws, and they were everywhere found to be faithful: but corruptions crept in among them with the increased depravity of the world; and at last, a gang more bold and curious than the rest, after destroying a traveller, determined, instead of following the old custom of leaving the body unnoticed, to watch and see how it was disposed of. They hid themselves, as they thought, secure from observation in the bushes by the side of the road, and waited the arrival of the goddess. But what mortal can escape the eye of Divinity? She quickly espied them, and called them before her. Terror-stricken by her splendid and terrific appearance, and in the utmost dread of her vengeance, they attempted to fly; but she arrested their steps, and in an awful manner upbraided them for their want of faith.

“‘You have seen me.’ said she, ‘and looked upon a power which no mortal has ever yet beheld without instant destruction; but this I spare you; henceforward, however, I shall no longer protect you as I have done. The bodies of those whom you destroy will no longer be removed by me, and you must take your own measures for their concealment. It will not always be effectual, and will often lead to your detection by earthy powers, and in this will consist your punishment. Your intelligence and cunning still remain to you. I will in future assist you by omens for your guidance; but this my decree will be your curse to the latest period of the world.’

“So saying she disappeared, and left them to the consequences of their own folly and presumption: but her protection has never been withdrawn. It is true, the remains of those who fall by our hands are sometimes discovered, and instances have been known of that discovery having led to the apprehension of Thugs, at least so I have heard; but during my lifetime I have never known of one, and it is my firm belief that such instances have been permitted on



purpose to punish those who have in some way offended our protectress, by neglecting her sacrifices and omens. You therefore see how necessary it is to follow the rules which have guided our fraternity for ages, and which cannot be changed without incurring the displeasure of the Divine power, nor is there anything in our creed to forbid it.

### **Nothing in our creed to forbid it**

We follow the blessed precepts our prophet; we say our Namaz five times a day; we observe all the rules of our faith; we worship no idols; and if what we have done for ages, ever since the invasion of India by our forefathers, was displeasing to the apostle, surely we should have had, long ere this, some manifestation of his displeasure. Our plans would have been frustrated, and exertions rendered of no avail; we should have dragged on a miserable existence, and, long ere this, should have abandoned Thuggee, and our connection with its Hindoo professor."

### **Had thought connection with Kafirs offensive**

"I am convinced," said I, "for your relation is wonderful. Truly have you said that we are under the special protection of Providence; and it would be sinful to question the propriety of any usages which have been transmitted from a period so remote, and followed without deviation. I will allow that I had thought this open connection with Kafirs as offensive, because I was led from the representations of the old Moolla who was my instructor, to believe them sunk into the lowest depths of depravity and bad faith; but he must have been ignorant or a bigoted old fool."

## **2. Peculiar dialect and signs, Edward Thornton<sup>16</sup>**

The operations of the Thugs are facilitated, and their designs cloaked, by a peculiar dialect: they have recourse, also, to a variety of signs, both for concealment, and for the purpose of communicating with comrades beyond the influence of speech. Drawing the back of the hand along the chin, from the throat outwards, implies that caution is requisite – that some stranger is approaching. Putting the open hand over the mouth, and drawing it gently down, implies that there is no longer cause for alarm. If an advanced party of Thugs overtake any traveller whom they design to destroy, but have need of more assistance, they make certain marks on the roads, by which those of the gang who follow understand that they are required to hasten forwards. A party in advance also leaves certain marks, where a road branches off, as intimations to those who are behind. They draw their feet along the dust, in the direction they have taken; and if their friends are to follow quickly, they leave the dust piled up at the end of the line where the foot drops, or make a hole in the dust



with the heel. If the road afford no dust, they have two stones, placed one upon the other, in the line they have taken; and strew a few leaves of trees along the road. If their co-adjutors are to make haste, they make a very long line of leaves. They have many other signs, for similar purposes...

### **Superstitions**

The superstitions of the Thugs are all of Hindoo origin: yet Mahometans adopt them with a belief equally implicit, and a devotion equally ardent. The greater number of the Thugs in the South of India are said to be Mahometans: not only do they profess to embrace the creed of Mecca, but, to a considerable extent, they follow it consistently. They marry, inherit, eat, and drink, according to the Koran: their devotions are statedly performed as the rule of Mahometan orthodoxy prescribes; and the Paradise to which their hopes are directed, is that portrayed by the cold, unspiritual, and sensual imagination of the false prophet to whom they profess allegiance: yet they pay divine honours to the impersonation of Destruction, which, in the eyes of all sound Mahometans, must be idolatry – a crime severely denounced in the Koran, and held by all good Mussulmans in abhorrence. These inconsistencies they find it hard to reconcile: sometimes they deny the worship of the goddess – the fact, however, is indisputable. At other times they seek to identify the patroness of the Thugs with a heroine of their own creed, to the great scandal of their brethren not initiated in the mysteries of Thuggee.

### **3. The Thugs, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>17</sup>**

...Both Hindoos and Mahometans belong to the Thugs...According to the deposition of an old Thug, nine-tenths of their number in the kingdom of Oude are Mussulmans; in the Doab, between the Ganges and the Jumna, four-fifths are Hindoos; to the south of the Nerbudda, three-fourths Mussulmans; in Rajahpootana, one-fourth Mussulmans; in Bundelkund, Sangoo, Bengal, Behar, and Orrisa, half are Hindoos, and half Mahometans.

The Thugs have their own language (Ramaseeana), and their particular signs, which are understood by all of them, however remote they may live from each other. There are various branches or sects among them, some of which are of higher rank than others; and, though they act together in the practice of their diabolical crimes, they keep themselves distinct in their modes of life. The Jumaldhee Thugs, in the kingdom of Oude, and to the east of the Ganges, are known as being particularly crafty, skilful, and mysterious. They are reserved even to their wives, and do not instruct their children in their murderous trade till they have attained mature age.

The Mooltanea Thugs are a Mahometan sect in the north of India. Accompanied by their wives and children, they undertake journeys under the



character of Brinyares, take with them a train of oxen and cows, laden with corn or merchandise, which they offer for sale in their camp, to attract victims. In strangling them, they use, instead of cloths, the cords of their oxen. Its is said that the Mooltaneas kill their daughters as soon as they are born, or, if they preserve them alive, they do not permit them to marry out of their own tribe. They live in no kind of community with the other Thugs, though they use their language, signs, and customs.

The Chingarees, or Naiks, are a branch of the Mooltaneas, and above a hundred families of them live in the neighbourhood of Hingolee. They follow the manners and customs of the Mooltaneas, by whom they are considered as inferior.

The Sooseeas are a younger class of Thugs, of the lowest Hindoo castes; they live in Jeypoor, Kishunghur, Bandu, Joudpoor, Tonk, and other places in Malwa and Rajahpootana; all the other Thugs despise them as an inferior tribe, and though they often employ them in their enterprise, they never eat with them. They are seen to travel through the country as merchants, money-carriers, or sepoy, who are in search of employment. When they travel in the former capacity, their leader, in the garb of an opulent merchant, is on horseback, in a wagon, or in a palanquin, surrounded by his companions, who serve him in the most respectful manner, and manifest the greatest deference towards him.

The Phansigar sect, so called from the manner in which they kill their victims, undertake long journeys, under the pretext of looking after thieves and murderers. Their leader is generally on horseback: they are accompanied by children under twelve years of age, to obviate suspicion, and oxen, to bring back their plunder in safety. A band generally consists of forty or fifty men, who set out on their journey in small divisions of ten or twelve, and meet at certain fixed places of rendezvous. They are assisted by the petty Poligars, or landholders, and by the chiefs of the villages, to whom they give up a portion of their plunder. Fathers frequently bring their children to them, to be instructed in the ways of murder.

The Phansigars were once very numerous, particularly in the district of Chittor, and are among the most cruel of the Thug sects; for the Phansigar does not hesitate to murder a man for a rupee, and kill even Coolies and Faquirs. Many hundred travellers are annually murdered by them: they make particular signs with their hands, and have a language unknown to the other Thugs.

The Phansigars (Phansi, i.e. Noose) live also in Mysore, the Carnatic, and Chittor, and first became known to the English in 1799, after the conquest of Seringapatam, when about 100 of them were taken, in the vicinity of Bangalore. They consist of Mussulmans and Rajahpoot Hindoos, and there also are Brahmins among them. They compare themselves with the tiger, which they never kill, affirming that a good Phansigaree is never attacked by the



tiger. They never murder boys and girls: the former are brought up to their own profession, and the latter intermarry with their sons...

### **Crime rate small compared to England**

It would be very unjust to form an unfavourable conclusion of the moral state of the whole people from these criminal sects; on the contrary, it appears from the statistical notices respecting the criminals of India, compiled by Colonel Sykes, that those people have the advantage of civilised Europe. It may, indeed, be questioned, whether the police can be so strictly exercised in India as in England and other European countries.

In the presidency of Bengal, the population of which is forty millions, the number of persons sentenced to death was 38 in the year 1838, 25 in 1839, and 27 in 1840, exclusively of the Thugs; whereas in England, during the same years, the numbers were 116, 56, and 57. In the same years, 81, 72, and 103 criminals were sentenced, in Bengal, to transportation or imprisonment for life; and in England, the numbers who suffered the same punishment were 266, 205, and 238. The number of persons condemned in 1837, including offences against the police, amounted to 38,902, which makes 1 to 1028 of the population; and in the year 1840, in which 42,785 were sentenced, 1 out of every 935 souls.

In the presidency of Madras, the population of which is 13,050,000, there was in the first half of the year 1839, 1 criminal to 609 souls; and in the latter half, 1 to 633, of whom 21 were sentenced to death; while, in England and Wales, 56 persons were condemned to death: in 1840, 20,622 were found guilty in this presidency, of whom 31 were condemned to death, and 69 to transportation; in England and Wales 27,187 were sentenced, of whom 77 were punished with death, and 238 to transportation.

In the presidency of Bombay, which contains 6,300,000 inhabitants, in two years and a half, from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1838, to the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1840, 15 on an average were annually sentenced to death, 45 to transportation, and 7 to imprisonment for life. The total amount of all crimes and misdemeanours, including those under cognisance of the police, was 91,999 in the space of four years in this Presidency, making nearly 23,000 in a year, or one criminal to every 273 souls.

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## **Some Indigenous Institutions**

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### **A. THE VILLAGE COMMUNITIES**

- 1. Thomas Munro was among the early British administrators to point out that the village community had always been the basic unit of administration in India and middlemen and tyrants like Tipu Sultan had usurped peasant rights in villages. The following excerpt is taken from his report from Anantpoor<sup>1</sup>**

Every village, with its twelve Ayangadees as they are called, is a kind of little republic, with the Potail, at the head of it; and India is a mass of such republics. The inhabitants during war, look chiefly to their own Potail. They give themselves no trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms; while the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred: wherever it goes the internal management remains unaltered; the Potail is still the collector and magistrate, and head farmer. From the age of Menu until this day the settlements have been made either with or through the Potails.

- 2. Mountstuart Elphinstone, in his *Report On The Territories Conquered From The Paishwa*, described the village communities he observed in Maratha territory<sup>2</sup>**

In whatever point of view we examine the Native government in the Deccan, the first and most important feature is the division into villages or township. These communities contain in miniature all the materials of a state within themselves, and are almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other government were withdrawn. Though probably not compatible with a very good form of government, they are an excellent remedy for the imperfections of a bad one; they prevent the bad effects of its negligence and weakness, and even present some barrier against its tyranny and rapacity.

Each village has a portion of ground attached to it, which is committed to the management of the inhabitants. The boundaries are carefully marked



and jealously guarded. They are divided into fields, the limits of which are as exactly known: each field has a name, and is kept distinct even when the cultivation of it has long been abandoned. The villagers are almost entirely cultivators of the ground, with the addition of the few traders and artisans that are required to supply their wants. The head of each village is the Patail, who has under him an assistant, called Chaugula, and a clerk called a Coolkurnee. There are besides 12 village officers, well known by name of the Barra Bullotee. These are the astrologer, the priest, the carpenter, barber, &c. but the only ones who are concerned in the administration of the government are the Sonar, or Potedar, who is silver-smith and assayer of money, and the Mhar, who, in addition to various other important duties, acts as watchmen to the village. Each of these classes consists of one or more individuals, according as their original families have branched out. The Mhars are seldom fewer than four or five, and there are besides, where those tribes are numerous, very frequently several Beels or Ramoossees, employed also as watchmen, but performing none of the other duties of the Mhar.

The Patails are the most important functionaries in the villages, and perhaps the most important class in the country. They hold their office by a grant from the government, (generally from that of the Moguls) are entitled in virtue of it to lands and fees, and have various little privileges and distinctions, of which they are as tenacious as of their land. Their office and emoluments are hereditary, and saleable with the consent of the Government, but are seldom sold except in cases of extreme necessity, though a partner is sometimes admitted with a careful reservation of the superiority of the old possessor. The Patail is head of the police, and of the administration of justice in his village, but he needs only be mentioned here as an officer of revenue. In that capacity he performs on a small scale what a Mamlutdar or collector does on a large: he allots the lands to such cultivators as have no landed property of their own, and fixes the rent which each has to pay: he collects the revenue for Government from all the ryots, conducts all its arrangement with them; and exerts himself to promote the cultivation and the prosperity of the village. Though originally the agent of the Government, he is now regarded as equally the representative of the ryots, and is not less useful in executing the order of the Government than in asserting the rights, or at least in making known the wrongs, of the people...

The result...of my own enquiries is, that a large portion of the ryots are the proprietors of their estates, subject to the payment of a fixed land-tax to Government; that their property is hereditary and saleable, and they are never dispossessed while they pay their tax, and even then they have for a long period, (at least 30 years) the right of reclaiming their estate, on paying the dues of Government...



**3. Sir James Mackintosh [1765-1832; Recorder of Bombay from February 1804 to November 1811] observed the village communities during a tour of the Deccan in 1808<sup>3</sup>**

In every village are a set of officers, the chief of whom is the 'potal,' or headman, who, with the assistance of the 'punchaet,' or village jury, determines small disputes, and punishes petty offences. These offices are in practice generally hereditary; but the tenure is undefined, and in some measure dependent upon the approbation of the villagers and the superior officers of government: they are, however, very seldom removed. They are scarcely affected by great revolutions. Every succeeding conqueror addresses his orders directly to them, and they are the immediate superiors, whom the people, under every government, obey: they are paid by a proportion of the village crop. Among the officers is the town astrologer – a person who, besides his pretended science, performs the important function of announcing to the cultivators the regular seasons for the operations of agriculture. The barber and the poet are also members of this corporation. In every such village are a certain number of men of the lowest caste, or rather outcastes, who are allowed land on condition of carrying the baggage of travellers, and guiding them from stage to stage. Native travellers never pay them for either service: Europeans generally pay them for the labour of carrying baggage. In a country without roads, the necessity of guides may be easily conceived...

**At the town of Athoorna where he halted, Mackintosh recorded**

The present potail is a 'dunghar,' or Shepard. The office had been in his family for three generations, and was bought by his grandfather from the former holder, a 'malee,' or gardener. This transaction is said not to be unfrequent, but it requires the assent of the other members of the corporation. All the officers are considered as hereditary, and not removable at the pleasure of jagheerdars. In case of small crimes, the potail and koolkurney, calling to their assistance four or six aged men of the various castes, try and punish the offenders. Civil disputes are settled in the same manner. These officers and assessors form the Punchaet, who are selected from castes with such impartiality, that even the 'Mahr' furnish assessors, though they be so low as to have no Bramin for their guru, and to have only a member of their own caste in that capacity, who offers their worship to a rude stone without the walls, venerated as an emblem of Lacksme, the wife of Vishnu, and the goddess of Fortune and Plenty. In cases of serious crimes, it is the duty of the potail and koolkurney to report the case to the jagheerdar, or superior officer intrusted with the property and government of the district, which are seldom separated in India. The whole people of the village may be present at all meetings of the Punchaet. The potail and koolkurney receive an eighth and a



twelfth of the produce of the village fields, as their salary...It appears that affairs are in the first instance settled by the village panchaet, composed of the potail, koolkurney, and the most respectable and aged persons of different castes, as assessors, but with a sort of appeal to the superior panchaet of the district, composed of the 'deshmook' and 'deshpandy,' with assessors selected in the same manner...

[Mackintosh noted that] The village fields are always spoken of as the hereditary land of the villagers (though we avoid, in our questions, every expression that might suggest such an idea). A strong instance of its prevalence occurred here. We asked the koolkurney if there were any Mussulmen here. He answered, 'none entitled to hereditary land;' and on being further questioned, made the title to hereditary land the distinction between an inhabitant and a sojourner. Their accounts of the town and district administration are as before. The killahdar is appointed by the jagheerdar to command a fort; the cutwal to maintain the police of a large town; and the comowisdar to collect the revenue, with some political authority not well defined. Except these appointments, all the other officers of towns and districts are hereditary, and discharge all the duties of magistracy – but that of plunder, which is reserved for what is called the government. Comparing Mr. Duncan's account of Benary with Mr. Prendergast's from Guzerat, and Dr. Buchanan's and Colonel Wilk's of the South, there seems no reason to doubt that this is the universal and immemorial constitution of Hindu society, and that an innumerable body of small republics, with hereditary chiefs, has preserved this vast country from that total ruin, which its nominal governors would otherwise have brought upon it.

#### **4. Mark Wilks [1760?-1831], Resident at Mysore from 1803 to 1808, wrote on the village communities in 1810<sup>4</sup>**

Every Indian village is, and appears always to have been, in fact, a separate community or republic; and exhibits a living picture of that state of things which theorists have imagined in the earlier stages of civilization, when men have assembled in communities for the purpose of reciprocally administering to each other's wants: 1. the Goud, Potail, Muccuddim, or Mumdil (as he is named in different languages), is the judge and magistrate; 2. the Curnum, Shanboag, or Putwaree, is the register; 3. the Taliary or Sthulwar, and, 4. the Totie, are severally the watchmen of the village and of the crops: 5. the Neergunttee distributes the water of the streams or reservoirs in just proportion to the several fields; 6. the Jotishee, or Joshee, or astrologer, performs the essential service of announcing the seasons of seed time and harvest, and the imaginary benefit of unfolding the lucky or unlucky days and hours for all the operations of farming; 7. the smith, and 8. carpenter, frame



the rude instruments of husbandry, and the ruder dwelling of the farmer; 9. the potter fabricates the only utensils of the village; 10. the washerman keeps clean the few garments which are spun, and sometimes woven, in the family of the farmer, or purchased at the nearest market; 11. the barber contributes to the cleanliness, and assists in the toilet of the villagers; 12. the silversmith, marking the approach of luxury, manufactures the simple ornaments with which they delight to bedeck their wives and their daughters: and these twelve officers (Barra bullowuttee, or Ayangadee), or requisite members of the community, receive the compensation of their labour, either in allotments of land from the corporate stock, or in fees, consisting of fixed proportions of the crop of every farmer in the village.

In some instances the lands of a village are cultivated in common, and the crop divided in the proportions of the labour contributed, but generally each occupant tills his own field; the waste land is a common pasture for the cattle of the village; its external boundaries are as carefully marked as those of the richest field, and they are maintained as a common right of the village, or rather the township (a term which more correctly describes the thing in our contemplation), to the exclusion of others, with as much jealousy and rancour as the frontiers of the most potent kingdoms. Such are the primitive component parts of all the kingdoms of India... The interior constitution and condition of each separate township remains unchanged; no revolutions affect it; no conquest reaches it. It is not intended to assert that the village in our contemplation may not have produced the Caesar of his little world; the rights of the inhabitants may have been invaded by the Potal, by the Poligar ruling over twenty, by the Wadeyar ruling over thirty-three, by the collector over two hundred, or by the sovereign of twenty thousand townships: each or either of these persons may have attempted, or have succeeded, or have failed, in persuading or forcing an augmentation of the proportion of money or of grain paid by the townships to the state, but conquests, usurpations, or revolutions, considered as such, have absolutely no influence on its condition. The conqueror, or usurper, directly or through his agents, addresses himself as sovereign or representative of the sovereign to the head of the township; its officers, its boundaries, and the whole frame of its interior management remain unalterably the same; and it is of importance to remember that every state in India is a congeries of these little republics.

**5. John Malcolm described the enduring character of the village communities on the basis of his personal experience in Central India<sup>5</sup>**

The rights of the Native hereditary officers of a village are much respected in Central India; and never did a country afford such proofs of the imperishable



nature of this admirable institution. After the Pindarry war, every encouragement was held out for the inhabitants to return to their desolate homes. In several districts, particularly those near the Nerbudda, many of the villages had been waste for more than thirty years. The inhabitants, who had been scattered, followed all occupations: many Potails, who had been obliged to leave their lands, had become plunderers, and remained at or near their ruined villages; some of their relations and friends followed their example; others cultivated grounds at a distance of several hundred miles from their homes; while a great majority went to the large towns, where they found a temporary asylum, and obtained subsistence by labouring in gardens or fields. But there is no people in whose hearts the love of the spot where they were born seems more deeply implanted than the Hindus; and those of Central India, under all their miseries and dispersion, appear never for a moment to have given up the hope of being restored to their homes. The families of each village, though remote from each other, maintained a constant communication, – inter-marriages were made, and the links that bound them together were only strengthened by adversity. When convinced that tranquility was established, they flocked to their roofless houses. Infant Potails (the second and third in descent from the emigrator) were in many cases carried at the head of their parties. When they reached their villages, every wall of a house, every field was taken possession of by the owner or cultivator, without dispute or litigation amongst themselves or with Government; and in a few days every thing was in progress, as if it had never been disturbed...[Malcolm records that in the year 1818 as a mark of encouragement, he gave turbans to more than a hundred Potails who returned to their desolate villages].

#### **6. Charles Metcalfe in his Minute of the Board of Revenue dated 17 November, 1830<sup>6</sup>**

The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindoo, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sik, English are all masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same...If a country remain for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that villages cannot be inhabited, the scattered villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the place of their fathers; the same site for the village, the same position for the houses, the same lands, will be occupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated...



**7. John Lawrence, when Collector of Delhi, on the vitality of village communities<sup>7</sup>**

They are admirably adapted to resist the evil effects of bad seasons, epidemics and other evils incidental to this country. Bound together by the ties of blood connection, and, above all, common interest, like the bundle of sticks...they are difficult to break. Drought may wither their crops, famine and disease may depopulate their houses, their fields may be deserted for a time, but when the storm blows over, if any survive, they are certain to return.

**8. W.H. Sleeman on the high degree of self-governance in Indian villages<sup>8</sup>**

There is perhaps no part of the world where the communities of which the society is composed have been left so much to self-government as in India. There has seldom been any idea of a reciprocity of duties and rights between the governing and the governed; the sovereign who has possession feels that he has a right to levy certain taxes from the land of the maintenance of the public establishments, which he requires to keep down rebellion against his rule, and to defend his dominions against all who may wish to intrude and seize upon them; and to assist him in acquiring the dominions of other princes when favorable opportunities offer; but he has no idea of a reciprocal duty towards those from whom he draws his revenues. The peasantry from whom the prince draws his revenues feel that they are bound to pay that revenue; that, if they do not pay it, he will, with his strong arm, turn them out and give to others their possessions – but they have no idea of any right on their part to any return from him. The village communities were everywhere left almost entirely to self-government; and the virtues of truth and honesty, in all their relations with each other, were indispensably necessary to enable them to govern themselves. A common interest often united a good many village communities in a bond of union, and established a kind of brotherhood over extensive tracts of richly cultivated land. Self-interest required that they should unite to defend themselves against attacks with which they were threatened at every returning harvest in a country where every prince was a robber upon a scale more or less large according to his means, and took the field to rob while the lands were covered with the ripe crops upon which his troops might subsist; and where every man who practiced robbery with open violence followed what he called an '*imperial trade*' (padshahi kam) – the only trade worth the character of a gentleman. The same interest required that they should unite in deceiving their own prince, and all his officers, great and small, as to the real resources of their estates; because they all knew that the prince would admit of no other limits to his exactions than their abilities to pay at the harvest. Though, in their relations with each other, all these village communities spoke as much



truth as those of any other communities in the world; still, in their relation with the Government, they told as many lies; – for falsehood, in the one set of relations, would have incurred the odium of the whole of their circles of society – truth, in the other, would often have involved the same penalty. If a man had told a lie to *cheat* his neighbour, he would have become an object of hatred and contempt – if he told a lie to *save* his neighbour's fields from an increase of rent or tax, he would have become an object of esteem and respect. If the Government officers were asked whether there was any truth to be found among such communities, they would say, No, *that the truth was not in them*; because they would not cut each other's throats by telling them the real value of each other's fields.

**9. Richard Temple [1826-1902; who served as John Lawrence's Secretary in Punjab], in 1851 on village communities in the Punjab<sup>9</sup>**

These wonderful communities, which have been noticed by the greatest writers on the growth and formation of human society, displayed their largest and yet their minutest development in the Punjab. Although in their main constitution there was a generic resemblance between them all, yet specific varieties existed in almost every one. The record of all these for each member of the brotherhood, and for the whole community in every parish, was undertaken, shewing what every individual had to pay, and the exact amount of his share or holding. Next the unwritten rules and customs, which from time immemorial had governed the affairs of the fraternity were reduced to writing. The revenue was assessed by the settlement officer on the whole village or parish, and the village community then distributed the burden among themselves...

**10. George Campbell, appointed Deputy-Commissioner and Political Assistant of Khytul and Ladwa, the easternmost district of the Cis-Sutlej states in May 1846, described the village communities and village self-government in the areas the British had begun to acquire<sup>10</sup>**

Indeed sometimes these villages were almost too strong for the rulers, and only paid (revenue) with considerable difficulty. The villages were almost all walled and fortified. I remember one strong village in Khytul, which for generations had made it a point of honour never to admit a Government officer within their walls; they paid the revenue over the wall, and that was enough. In that same village the different "Pattis" (subdivision of village) were barricaded against one another. They all combined against an outside foe, but could not trust one another.



**On village communities at Wadnee, south of the Sutlej, between Ludhiana and Ferozepur**

[The villages are] a model of constitutional government...I have always thought that throughout India a very great deal of harm has been done by the interference of our authorities, both executive and judicial (especially judicial), with indigenous village corporations...

I continued to do all I could to maintain and foster the village constitutions, always believing that they are the true foundation of local self-government – the basis from which we may work upwards. As those village constitutions then existed they certainly worked admirably well; and I think that, more fortunate than other parts of India, the Punjaub still retains these corporations in good vitality. As respects the limited common interest in property, the common rights in grazing, etc., and the common liability for the revenue, the people showed no desire whatever to dissolve that community of interest. If any man ever did from any cause fail to make up his quota of the revenue, the others were always very ready to take over his holding.

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# **Architecture**

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- A. Temples, sacred wells and pillars
- B. Cave temples
- C. Palaces
- D. Forts
- E. Mosques
- F. Tombs
- G. Minars
- H. Gardens

## **A. TEMPLES, SACRED WELLS AND PILLARS**

### **1. Deogir, William Hodges<sup>1</sup>**

...on the following day arrived at Deogur, a small village, famous for the resort of Hindoo pilgrims, this being a sacred spot. There are five curious Pagodas here, of perhaps the very oldest construction to be found in India. They are simply pyramids, formed by piling stone on stone, the apex is cut off at about one-seventh of the whole height of the complete pyramid, and four of them have small ornamental buildings on the top, evidently of more modern work, which are finished by an ornament made of copper, and gilt, perfectly resembling the trident of the Greek Neptune. These Pagodas have each a small chamber in the center, of twelve feet square, with the lamp, hanging over the Lingham. The passage to it is exactly of a height and width sufficient to admit one person. This chamber can have no light from without, but what enters from the door and through the passage.

### **2. Buxar, monument to Lord Ram, George Forster<sup>2</sup>**

The curiosities to be seen at Buxar are few, and excepting one, not worthy of enumeration. But this one, the Hindoos hold in a degree of estimation not



inferior to that of the Neapolitans for the blood of Saint Januarius, or those of their faith in general for the holy house at Loretta. The monument in question, which is erected on a small mount to the westward of the fort, is sacred to the memory of the God Ram, who is seen occasionally officiating as the Mars of the Hindoos; and is said to have the direction of war and victory. It would appear, that Ram, whilst a youth, made a visit to this eminence, and tarried on it for the space of seven days, where he was taught from some learned master of the science, the art of managing the bow, and wonderful were his feats with this weapon in after-times: indeed, were the most moderate of them to be recorded, it would be readily admitted without torturing the phrase, that Ram “drew a long bow.”

### **3. Sitakund, Thomas Twining<sup>3</sup>**

Having heard of a celebrated hot well in the neighbourhood, called Seetacoon, I procured a guide, and mounting my tanyan at gunfire, directed my morning ride towards it...I found the well without difficulty. It consisted of a basin of water a few feet square, supplied by a bubbling source at the bottom. Some fragments of brickwork seemed to imply that it was once in a state of less neglect than at present. It probably was protected against injurious aggression by a wall, or had a temple dedicated to Seeta, or baths attached to it. I had no means of ascertaining the heat, but my guide, when he arrived, said it was sufficient to boil an egg in a very short time, – a fact I could easily conceive, for I could not keep my hand in the water for a moment. No mineral quality was discoverable in it either by the taste or by the external appearance of the ground over which it flowed away. Its principle virtue was its purity and consequent wholesomeness, and also its property of remaining good for a great length of time in casks or bottles. For these reasons it is not only much drunk by the wealthier inhabitants of Monghir, or such as can afford to send for it, but is often dispatched to Calcutta for the use of persons about to undertake a long sea voyage. On these occasions it is either sent off in large jars, or in bottles filled at the spring. I was told that in the latter case it would preserve its tasteless purity for more than a twelvemonth.

### **4. The Agni-kund at Abu, James Tod who began his journey from Udaipur on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1822<sup>4</sup>**

While the camp-baskets were unlocking, I could not resist taking a peep at the fire-fount and the shrine of Achil-eswar, one of the most renowned in the fabulous annals of the Hindus. The Man-agni-coonda is about nine hundred feet long by two hundred and forty in breadth, excavated in the solid rock, and lined with solid masonry of immensely large bricks. An insulated mass of rock has been left in the center of the coond, on which are the ruins of a shrine to Mata,



the universal mother. On the crest of the northern face of the coond is a group of small temples dedicated to the Pandu brothers, but, like the former, a mass of ruins.

### 5. The shrine of Achil-eswar at Abu, James Tod<sup>5</sup>

On the western side is the shrine of Achil-eswar, the tutelary divinity of Aboo. There is nothing striking as to magnitude, and still less as to decoration, in this, but it possesses a massive simplicity which guarantees its antiquity. It occupies the center of a quadrangle, surrounded by smaller fanes, alike primitive in form, and built of blocks of blue slate. But it is the object of worship which confers celebrity, being nothing less than the great toe of the devil, for so we must translate *Patal-eswar*, the Lord of Hell. On entering, the eye is attracted by a statue of the mountain nymph, Mera, the wife of this multiform divinity, which, at first sight, appears to be the object of adoration; and it is only on stooping to look into a deep fissure of the rock, termed the *Brimh-khar*, that the bright nail of Siva is visible, which has attracted homage from myriads of votaries from the remotest ages. In front of the temple is a brass bull, of colossal size, bearing the marks of violence on his flanks, the hammer of the barbarian having penetrated them in search of treasure, Mahomed Beyra, Padsha or king of Ahmedabad, has the credit of this sacrilege; but whether it was rewarded by the discovery of any secret hoard, is not told: though the legend details the manifestation of Siva's wrath upon the "barbarian king" for the ill-treatment of his favorite. In descending from Aboo, after the reduction of Achilgurh, his banners "fanned by Conquest's crimson wing," confusion waited on them from an unlooked-for source. A legion of bees, issuing from their pinnacled retreats, attacked and pursued the invaders even to Jhalore. To commemorate this victory over the spoiler, the name of *Bhomar-t'hal*, or 'Bees Valley,' was given to the spot. A temple was erected, and from the captured arms thrown away in their flight, a vast *tridanta* (trident) was formed, and placed in front of the divinity who thus avenged the insult to Nanda.

### 6. Jain temples at Mt. Abu, James Tod<sup>6</sup>

Here every thing is Jain, and the shrine dedicated to Vrishabdeva [Rishabhdeva] is well worth of notice, from its containing no fewer than twelve immense images to this, the first of the twenty-four pontiffs who attained the honours of apotheosis. They are said to weigh many thousand maunds, and to be a compound of all the metals. Near the base of the inner fort, on the left hand, on leaving it, is another temple dedicated to Parswanat'h [Parasnath], whose statute it contains. This was erected or repaired by the celebrated Komarpal, King of Anhulwarra, the patron of the sect, and disciple of Hemachundra, a potent name among the Jains...



**Dilwara**

...Let the reader discard his shoes, and prepare to enter with me the sacred fanes of Dailwara. This is a contraction of Dewulwarra, 'the place or region of temples,' a term aptly applied to the site of this numerous group, from which I select two of the most remarkable.

The reader will be pleased to consider himself at the entrance of the shrine sacred to Vrishabdeva, the first of the Jains. Beyond controversy this is the most superb of all the temples of India, and there is not an edifice besides the Mahal that can approach to it. The pen is incompetent to describe the exuberant beauties of this proud monument of the Jains, raised by one of the richest of their votaries (by whose name, and not that of the pontiff enshrined within, it is still designated), and which continues to attract pilgrims from every region of India. Bimul Shah, whose work has immortalized him, was a merchant of Anhulwarra, at one time the Tyre of India, and the ancient stronghold of the Jain faith. It was, however, towards the close of her long career of renown, that these two edifices were erected and happily for these votaries of Jainism, who, to use the words of the bard, "exchanged their perishable wealth for an immortal name," for hardly were the fabrics reared, when the metropolis of Western India was sacked, its merchants driven forth, and their riches transferred to the Northern Invader. Previous to their erection, the immediate spot was occupied by the orthodox divinities, Siva and Vishnu, whose ministers would not tolerate the approach of any of the sectarian enemies of their faith; but the Sahoos of Nehrwalla, giving this the preference over any other site on the surface of Aboo, determined to try the effect of gold on the sovereign, or, as they allegorically say, "Lacshmi herself entered into the scheme, to gain a victory for their faith." The bribe was high, they offered to cover as much ground as they required for their purpose with silver coin, – a temptation too powerful for the Pramara to withstand, – and, despite the anathema of the priests of Bal-Siva and Vishnu, he took the lacs of the Jain merchants. The name of the prince is not mentioned, but the date of the temples shews him to be the same sacrilegious Dharaburz, who attempted to inundate the Khar of Sacti. The merchants were not ungrateful of Lacshmi, whom they enshrined in a niche on the right hand of the entrance.

**The temple of Vrishabdeva [Rishabhdeva]**

The temple of Vrishabdeva stands isolated in the center of a quadrangular court, the length of which, from east to west, is about one hundred and eighty feet, and the breadth one hundred feet. Along its internal faces are ranges of cells, nineteen on the larger, and ten on each of the smaller sides, each cell being of uniform dimensions....

The whole is of pure white marble, every column, dome, and altar varying



in form and ornament, the richness and delicacy of execution being indescribable. Each of the fifty-eight cells merits an entire day's study, and a first-rate pencil to delineate it. It is asserted that each separate cell was added by wealthy individuals, of various cities and countries, professing the Jain faith, which may account for the great diversity of style and ornament, while the harmony and symmetry of the whole attest that one master-mind must have planned and executed it, except at the south-west angle, where some dissimilarity prevails. The altars are of a chaste and simple design, while money, labour, skill, and taste, have been lavished on the details of the colonnade, wherein each of the columnar rules of Jain architecture has its example. Each cell contains its statue decided to the particular object of worship of the person at whose expense it was raised, and inscriptions recording the period of erection are carved on the inner lintel of every doorway...

### Temple dedicated to Parswanat'h

I could have consumed a month in surveying the works of the princely merchant, but time pressed, and other objects of equal importance awaited me. Passing through a court, a flight of steps conducts to the rival temple, dedicated to Parswanat'h, the twenty-third and most popular of the Jineswars. This shrine was erected by the brothers Tej Pal and Bussunt Pal, likewise merchants of the Jain persuasion, who inhabited the city of Chandravati during the sway of Dharaburz, and when Dheem Deo was paramount sovereign of Western India. The design and execution of this shrine and all its accessories are on the model of the preceding, which, however, as a whole, it surpasses. It has more simple majesty, the fluted columns sustaining the munduff are loftier, and the vaulted interior is fully equal to the other in richness of sculpture, and superior to it in the execution, which is more free and in finer taste... It is impossible to give a distinct idea of the richness and variety of the *bassi-relievi* either of the principal dome or the minor ones which surround it. We must not, however, overlook a singular ornament pendant from the larger vault, the delineation of which defies the pen, and would tax to the utmost the pencil of the most patient artist. Although it has some analogy to the corbeille of a gothic cathedral, there is nothing in the most florid style of gothic architecture that can be compared with this in richness. Its form is cylindrical, about three feet in length, and where it drops from the ceiling, it appears like a cluster of the half-disclosed lotus, whose cups are so thin, so transparent, and so accurately wrought, that it fixes the eye in admiration....

### 7. Temple of Rudra-Mal one of the grandest efforts of Hindu architecture, James Tod<sup>7</sup>

SIDPOOR – JUNE 20<sup>th</sup> – In the infancy of our geography of India, the



illustrious D' Anville said of this city, "*ville qui tire son nom des Shites, ou toiles peintes, qui s'y fabriquent*;" but it boasts of a more dignified etymology, being called after its patron, the Balhara prince, Sid-Rae. By some he is supposed to be the founder, but there is every reason to believe that he was only the renovator, of this place, the position of which on the Sarasvati, flowing from the shrine of Ambabhavani, is well-chosen. Here are the remains of what in past ages must have been one of the grandest efforts of Hindu architecture, a temple dedicated to Siva, and termed Roodra-Mala, or 'the chaplet of Roodra,' the god of battle; but so disjointed are the fragments, that it is difficult to imagine what it may have been as a whole. They are chiefly portions of porticoes, one of which tradition names the prostyle of the munduff, or vaulted mansion occupied by the bull, companion of Roodra, whose sanctum was converted into a mosque. It is said to have been a rectangular building, five stories in height, and if we may judge from one portion yet remaining, this could not have been less than one hundred feet...I found two inscriptions, from one of which I learned that it was commenced by Raja Moolraj [the founder of the Solankhi dynasty of Anhilwara], in S. 998 [A.D. 942], and from the other that it was finished by Sid-Raj...A couplet records its destruction by All-u-din – "In S. 1353 [A.D. 1297], came the barbarian Alla: the Roodra-Mala he levelled, "carrying destruction amongst the lords of men."

### **8. Palitana, James Tod<sup>8</sup>**

PALIT'HANA – NOVEMBER 17<sup>th</sup> –...never did pilgrim, Jain or Buddhist, approach the sacred Mount Satrunja with more excited feelings than I, a "barbarian" Frank.

I had, however, allowed imagination to outstrip experience, having no right to look for grand discoveries in the lands over which Mahomed [Mahmud of Ghazni] and Alla [Alauddin Khalji] had led their legions, fulfilling the iconoclastic injunctions of Moses, conveyed through the Prophet of Islam...however extensive their demolition of religious edifices, it was beyond the power of these conquerors to destroy the memorials of a sect which, more than any other, depended on tradition for the perpetuity of their tenets.

Palit'hana, 'the dwelling of the Palli,' is situated at the eastern base of Satrunja, the mount sacred to Adnath (the first of the twenty-four hierophants of the Jains), which rises nearly two thousand feet, and is between two and three miles in ascent, taking the sinuosities of the route into account. My researches in this interesting spot were materially aided by an introduction through my own Yuti to some learned priests, now here on a pilgrimage, who gave me much information on points connected with their religion, as well as details concerning the *teerut*, from the *Satrunja Mahatma*, a portion of which work they had with them...



Satrunja is one of the Panj-teer'thas, or five places of pilgrimage of the Jains. Of these, three, viz. Arbudha, Satrunja, and Girnar, are at hand. The fourth, Samel-sikra, is in the ancient kingdom of Magadha, now Behar, and the fifth, Chandragir, the Silver Mount, also called *Shescuta*, or the 'thousand-pinnacled,' lies amidst the snowy regions of the Hindu Kho, or Parbut-put-pamer, the Caucasus and Paropamisus of the Greeks...

We have no evidence that Mahmoud of Ghizni visited the sacred mounts of the Jains, but it is well attested, that the fury of the "sanguinary Alla" made all sects conceal their gods under-ground, for those they did not hide he destroyed. Many have since been brought to light, but comparatively few of the sculptures of ancient times are now existing. In like manner, the temples suffered, those only escaping which were converted into mosques. The consequence is, that in the Chaok of Adnat'h, although you cannot look around without beholding every where vestiges of antiquity, no entire edifice appears to claim this distinction, as they are for the most part incongruous structures, raised from dilapidated remnants, so that Komarpal's own temple, from continual deterioration and repair, does not bear any greater signs of antiquity than that recently erected by the wealthy banker...

## 9. Patan-Somnath, James Tod<sup>9</sup>

NOVEMBER 29<sup>th</sup> – At length, I obtained a view of this, perhaps the most renowned of all the shrines of India, 'the city' *par eminence*, more reverentially styled Deva-Puttun, 'the city of the god,' or still more accurately, Deva-Pat'han, 'the chief dwelling of the deity.'...As we approached, we crossed the *Triveni*, or three united streams, viz. the Vrijini, the Sarasvati (a name of the Hindu Minerva), and the Hiranya, or 'golden.'...What a host of associations arose to one who had indulged the hope of making a pilgrimage to this the most celebrated shrine connected with Hindu and Mooslem history! Pressing on to the goal, I passed, with mingled prejudice and contempt, the place of sepulture of the Mooslem saint, Abbi-Sah, nor halted for breath, until within the "temple of the sun," deserted, desecrated, a receptacle for kine, the pinnacle, to its spring from the *cella*, demolished, and the fragments strewing the ground. There is nothing of immensity, though there is great solidity, in the structure, which is of the order of sacred architecture called *Sikra-bund*, or 'pinnacled,' and with all the details of decoration laid down in the *Silpi-sastra*. The figures are bold in design, the attitudes of some striking, but the material, a coarse gritty sandstone, does not give great scope or facility to the chisel; yet, as a whole, the edifice is imposing. The jambs and lintel of the entrance-door are of a well-polished yellow-coloured mineral, apparently jasper, though it may be that species of marble akin to the *jaune antique*. The *munduff*, or central dome, is not above sixteen feet in diameter, supported by strong, slightly ornamented



columns, having a portico all round, terminated by square pilasters abutting from the external wall. Beyond the *munduff*, there is a domed vestibule, with pillars and pilasters, leading to the *sanctum*, where a globular patch of red paint, placed by the cowherds, is now the only symbol of the sun-god. The sovereigns of Nehrwalla had repaired the injuries done by Mahmoud, but the spire, again thrown down by the sanguinary Alla, has never been re-erected. North of the temple is the Surya-coonda, excavated from the solid rock. The descent to it is by a steep flight of narrow steps. The water is said to cure the diseases of both body and mind, the term of ablution and probation being one solar revolution, during which, not only faith, but good works must be manifested, in order to make the remedy efficacious...

### **Shrine of Siddeshwar**

From the shrine of the god of light, I descended to that of Sideswar, the god of the monastic orders, obscurely buried in an excavation of the rock, dismal and damp, the low roof supported by a few crumbling columns. One might fancy this the cave of Delphos, though the perceptions of our blind oracle proved far more acute than those of most of his brethren. However rudely executed, all was strictly characteristic of "hell's dark abode." Besides statues of Hinglaz Mata, and Patal-eswar, 'lord of the infernal regions,' there were nine small figures in high relief, carved on the frieze of a miniature shrine, said by the blind minister to be "the images of those who rule the destiny of man." There was a small square court in front of the cave, whose walls have been repaired or constructed out of the ruins of other temples, having fragments of the gods in every attitude. It is shaded by some fine Burr trees, which are sacred to Siva. Although there is nothing attractive here, yet whoever is conversant with mythology will be struck, not only by the classical nature of the cave-temple, but by the perfect contrast it exhibits between the powers of light and darkness, in juxtaposition, and the rapid transition of the votary from the one to the other.

### **The spot where Krishna resigned his breath**

From this cave I proceeded to a spot, deemed by the Hindu the holiest of the holy, where the shepherd-god resigned his breath....

A Peepul sapling, averred to be "a scion of the original tree," marks the spot where the Hindu Apollo expired, and a flight of steps conducts to the bed of the 'golden' Hiranya, for the pilgrim to lustrate himself. This place of purification bears the name of *Swergadwara*, or 'door of bliss,' and contends with that of Deva-puttun for superior efficacy in absolving from sin. It is adorned by two beautiful reservoirs, called the *Bhalca* and *Padma-coondas*, the 'dart and lotus fountains.' The former is a dodecahedron, whose diameter



is about three hundred feet. The lotus-coond is smaller, having its surface covered with this elegant flower, sacred to Kanya [Lord Krishna], and whence his most euphonous appellation, Comala, is derived; while on its eastern bank there is a small shrine to Mahadeo. These fountains are peculiarly sacred in the eyes of the followers of the shepherd-god, and were so in Akber's time; for Abulfazil devotes some space to the holy pilgrimages of Peepulsirr and Bhalcateerut (*bhal*, 'a dart'). Moosmen intolerance is strikingly obvious in the erection of a place of prayer touching the consecrated Peepul, and although the government of these regions has now long been under Hindu princes of strong religious zeal, the offensive Musjid remains undisturbed, furnishing a powerful contrast between the amiable endurance of the one, and the bigotry of the other faith...

### The vestibule of Somnath

Behold me in the vestibule of Somnat'h, the far-famed shrine of idolatry which lured "the star of Islam" from its orbit amidst the Paropamisan and Caucasus, to the sandy shores of the Indian ocean within the torrid zone; and though now but the shell of what it was, though denuded of its *sikra* (pinnacle), whose fragments strew the ground, divested of its majestic superstructure, and but the trunk of a once perfect form, yet from its wrecks we may judge of its pristine character. That so much has been spared, we owe to that excess of zeal, which made conquest incomplete without conversion; which transformed the *mindra* into the mosque, and the altar of the sun-god into a pulpit for the Moollah, whence, while yet reeking with blood, the song of victory resounded amid shouts of '*La Illah, Mahomed Rusool Illahi*,' 'There is but one God, and Mahomed is his prophet.' But without is another symbol of conversion, the pinnacled minarets at the entrance of the temple, the handiwork of the Mooslem artificer, whence the Muezzin of Mahmoud called aloud on the soldiers of the Faith to give glory to God and his prophet, for the victory obtained over the infidel. Could we be assured that any spark of genuine taste and liberal feeling induced him to spare even this mutilated remnant of the days of old, we might try to veil the barbarities inflicted in the name of religion, under the spirit of chivalry which braved the varied perils encountered in her cause; for this, the twelfth expedition of Mahmoud, must be ranked amongst the hardest enterprises which frenzied ambition, under the cloak of sanctity, ever undertook...

### The temple of Somnath

The temple of Somnat'h stood in the center of an immense quadrangular court, defended by its own lofty battlements. The subordinate shrines, which, like satellites, heightened the splendour of the 'Lord of the Moon,' are now



levelled with the earth, and mosques, walls, and the habitations of mortals, have been raised from their *debris*. The extent of the court may be estimated by the simple fact, that the nearest of the reservoirs for the lustrations of Bal and his priests is full one hundred yards distant from the shrine. The great mosque, called the Joomma Musjid, must have absorbed the materials of at least five of these minor shrines; for its five vaulted cupolas, with all their appendages, are purely Hindu, and the enormous triple-colonnaded court, in which it stands, must have cost a dozen more.

Such was and such is the shrine of Somnat'h, even now a noble object, yet how much grander in the high and palmy days of Hinduism, with all its ministrant appendages!...

### **Beauty of site**

Nothing can surpass the beauty of the site chosen for the temple, which stands on a projecting rock, whose base is washed by the ocean. Here, resting on the skirt of the mighty waters, the vision lost in their boundless expanse, the votary would be lulled to a blissful state of repose by the monotonous roar of the waves. Before him is the bay, extending to Billawul, its golden sands kept in perpetual agitation by the surf, in bold and graceful curvature; it is unrivalled in India, and although I have since seen many noble bays, from that of Penzance to Salernum, perhaps the finest in the world, with all its accessories of back-ground, and in all the glory of closing day, none ever struck my imagination more forcibly than that of Puttun. The port and headland of Billawul, with its dark walls raised as a defence against the pirates of Europe, form a noble terminating point of view, and from which the land trends northwards to Dwarica. The peaks of Girnar, twenty coss distant (N. 7° E.), would raise the sublimest feelings, or if he chooses more tranquil scenes, the country around presents objects of interest, the plains being well-wooded, and diversified both by nature and art.

Such is the chief temple of paganism, the destruction of which, in A.H. 416 (A.D. 1008), was deemed by the Sultan of Ghizni an act of religious duty.

### **10. Lord Ellenborough in Ferozpur with the gates of the Somnath temple, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>10</sup>**

Lord Ellenborough, the Governor General, made his entry into Ferozpur on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, with 120 elephants, 700 camels, and numerous wagons...General Nott crossed the Sutlej with his corps on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, the anniversary of the murder of Sir William M'Naughten. He brought with him the famous sandal-wood gates of Somnauth, which were covered with red cloth, embroidered with gold, and drawn by twenty-four oxen. It is said that Mahmood the Ghuznevide took these gates with him to Ghuznee,



when he destroyed the temple of Somnauth, in 1025; but this splendid Hindoo temple, to which they are to be restored, retains scarcely a trace of its former magnificence, and its remains have been converted into a mosque. The Maharaja, Shere Singh, had not only sent a bodyguard to receive the gates on British territory, but had given a present of a sum of money to the escort. When I went to examine the gates more closely the next day, I found a number of Brahmins, strewing flowers upon them, who assured me there was not the slightest doubt that they were genuine. They are most skillfully carved with stars and arabesques, and bordered with Kufic characters, but unfortunately the gates are so much injured, that scarcely the half of the beautiful work has been preserved.

### 11. The temple of Dwarka, James Tod<sup>11</sup>

The temple of Dwarica, the most celebrated of all the shrines raised to Crishna [Krishna], is built upon an eminence rising from the sea-shore, and surrounded by a fortified wall, which likewise encircles the town, from which it is, however, separated by a lofty partition-wall, through which it is necessary to pass to see it to advantage. The architectural character of this temple is that to which we are accustomed to give the name of pagoda. It may be said to consist of three parts: the munduff, or hall of congregation; the *devachna*, or *penetralia* (also termed *gabarra*); and the *sikra*, or spire...the chisel of Islam had been also at work, and defaced every graven image, nor is there enough remaining to disclose the original design: nevertheless, this obliteration has been done with care, so as not to injure the edifice.

The basement, or square portion of the temple, from which springs the *sikra*, was the *sanctum* in former ages, when *Budha-trivicrama* was the object of adoration, anterior to the heresy of Crishna, who was himself a worshipper of Budha, whose miniature shrine is still the *sanctum-sanctorum* of Dwarica, while Crishna is installed in a *cella* beyond. The *sikra*, or spire, constructed in the most ancient style, consists of a series of pyramids, each representing a miniature temple, and each diminishing with the contracting spire, which terminates at one hundred and forty feet from the ground. There are seven distinct stories before this pyramidal spire greatly diminishes in diameter; each face of each story is ornamented with open porches, surmounted by a pediment supported by small columns. Each of these stories internally consists of column placed on column, whose enormous architraves increase in bulk in the decreasing ratio of the superimposed mass, and although the majority at the summit are actually broken by their own weight, yet they are retained in their position by the aggregate unity. The capitals of these columns are quite plain, having four cross projections for the architraves to rest on; and by an obtuseness in the *Silpi* not to be accounted for, several of these architraves do not rest on



the columns, but on the projections; and, strange to say, the lapse of centuries has proved their efficiency, though Vitruvius might have regarded the innovation with astonishment. The entire fabric, whose internal dimensions are seventy-eight feet by sixty-six, is built from the rock, which is a sandstone of various degrees of texture, forming the substratum of the island; – it has a greenish hue, either from its native bed, or from imbibing the saline atmosphere, which, when a strong light strikes upon it, gives the mass a vitreous transparent lustre. Internally it has a curious conker-like appearance. The architraves are, however, an exception, being of the same calcareous marine conglomerate, not unlike travertine, as already described in the temple of Somnat'h.

The foundation of this shrine must have been laid in the solstice, as its front varies ten points from the meridian line; and as the *Silpi*, or architect, in these matters, acts under the priest, we may infer that the *Surya Siddhanta* was little known to the Goorgoocha Brahmins, the ministrants of their times, who took the heliacal rising of those days as the true east point; its breadth is, therefore, from N.N.W. to S.S.E. Contrary to custom, it has its back to the rising sun, and faces the west.

Crishna is here adored under his form of Rinchor, when he was driven from his patrimony, Surasena, by the Budhist king of Magadha. A covered colonnaded piazza connects the *cella* of Crishna with a miniature temple dedicated to Deoki, his mother; and within the ample court are various other shrines, one of which, in the S.E. angle, contains the statue of Budha Trivicrama, or, as he is familiarly called, Tricam-Rae and Trimnat'h, which is always crowded with votaries. Opposite to this, or at the S.W. angle of the main temple, is a smaller one, dedicated to another form of Crishna, Madhu Rae, and between these is a passage leading by a flight of steps to the Goomtee, a small rivulet, whose embouchure with the ocean is especially sacred, though it would not wet the instep to cross it. From the grand temple to the *sungum*, or point of confluence, where there is a small temple to Sungum-Narayn, the course of the Goomtee is studded with the cenotaphs of those pilgrims who were fortunate enough to surrender life at this "*dwara* of the deity." Amongst them are four of the five Pandu brothers, countenancing the tradition that the fifth proceeded across the Hemachil, where, being lost sight of, he is said to have perished in its snows, and whither he was accompanied by Baldeo, the Indian Hercules, whose statue is enshrined in the south-west corner of the great *munduff*, several steps under ground. Baldeo is represented on his ascent from *patal*, or the infernal regions, after some monstrous combat.

## **12. Temple of Pandus in Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>12</sup>**

About half a mile further on [from Kshir Nag] we came to an interesting



ruin on our right. Like others of the same kind, it is called by the peasants a building of the Pandus, the heroic princes of Hindu epic verse, but believed here to have been giants. The edifice must have been a square temple, with four doors, approached by broad and spacious porches, and enclosed by a wall with four gates opposite to the doors of the central structure. A part of one of these was still standing, but of the walls the foundations alone remain, and the temple itself is a confused mass of ruins. The most remarkable feature of these remains was their magnitude. All the blocks were of immense size, and many of them could not have weighed less than ten tons. Many of them also presented traces of most elaborate sculpture. At the adjacent village of Wantipur [Avantipur, founded by King Avanti Varma in 876A.D.] we found similar remains, and here also one of the gateways was nearly entire. This was much richer than in the first edifice, and was covered with ornaments, scrolls, and figures. Two masses of stone on each side of the entrance, and each supported by a single pillar, were of an extraordinary size. The shape of the temple was undefined, and the principal part of its fragments seemed to be carved cornices or portions of the roof. The stone of which these buildings were constructed is a limestone, which is susceptible of a high polish, and might be termed grey marble.

### **13. Mahaballipuram, Bishop Heber<sup>13</sup>**

...the real city of Maha-Bali-poor, whose ruins stand among the cliffs at the distance of a short half-mile inland. This has really been a place of considerable importance as a metropolis of the ancient kings of the race of Pandion, and its rocks which, in themselves, are pretty and picturesque, are carved out into porticos, temples, bas-reliefs, &c. on a much smaller scale, indeed, than Elephanta or Kennery, but some of them very beautifully executed. They differ from those of the north and west of India (which are almost all dedicated to Shiva or Kali,) in being in honour of Vishnu, whose different avatars are repeated over and over in the various temples, while I only saw the solitary lingam, if it be one, which I have mentioned, in the sea, and one unfinished cave, which struck me as intended for a temple of the destroying power.

Many of the bas-reliefs are of great spirit and beauty; there is one of an elephant with two young ones strikingly executed; and the general merit of the work is superior to that of Elephanta, though the size is extremely inferior. I had heard much of the lions which are introduced in different parts of the series, and the execution of which are said to be more remarkable because no lions are known to exist in the south of India. But I apprehend that the critics who have thus praised them have taken their idea of a lion from those noble animals which hang over inn-doors in England, and which, it must be owned,



the lions of Maha-Bali-poor very remarkably resemble; they are in fact precisely such animals as an artist who had never seen one, would form from description...

**14. The pillar at Surij Bagh [the Bagh was made by Surij Bahri, who was summoned to Kashmir by Moti Ram, the first viceroy under Ranjit Singh], Baron Hugel<sup>14</sup>**

The Surij Bagh is probably on the site of the once famous city of Parihasapur, of the marvels of which the native legends speak so highly. This city was built by the great conqueror Lalitaditya, who reigned from A.D. 714 to 750, and was adorned with many fine temples and monuments; among others, with a pillar cut out of one stone, twenty-four yards high, at the top of which stood the image of Garuda, half-man, half-eagle. Sikandar Budh Shikan probably destroyed it, but several fragments were seen in 1727 by Mohammed Azim. Immense images of gold, silver, and other metals, also adorned the interior, but all traces of this splendour have disappeared.

**15. Enormous pillar, G.T. Vigne<sup>15</sup>**

At the commencement of the fourth mile from Pampur, a low spur of steep rock descends from the mountains, and rests upon the flat upon the bank of the river. Near its extremity, where it may be about one hundred feet high, is the capital, and five feet of the shaft, of an enormous limestone-pillar. The capital is about five feet in diameter, and polygonal. The plinth is much damaged, but enough is left to show that it was composed (at least I thought so) of four gigantic female busts, most likely those of Luksmi, if the pillar supported the Garuda or bird of Vishnu, as mentioned below. It is lying on its side, and was probably overthrown by the zeal of "the idol-breaker". A flat surface, sufficiently large to answer the purpose of a base; has been cut on the rock; but I could not discover a vestige of any other ruin near it. About half a mile nearer the city is another large block, on which are rudely sculptured the knees and legs of a gigantic sitting figure, not crossed like those of a Hindu figure in general, but apparently bent like those of an Egyptian statue; all the remainder seemed to have been broken off; but although the uncultivated slope around it is strewn with large masses of stone, I saw nothing that must be necessarily supposed to have formed part of the image. Near them again are some enormous *lingams*, or pieces of sculpture, that are, as is well known, venerated by the Hindus as the emblems of Siva.

I could not contemplate these massive relics without imagining for a moment that they may have originally been parts of a city and vast Hindu temple, which, being near the modern city, and consequently of so much the greater sanctity and importance, must have called for the especial notice of Butshikan.



## 16. Patan, G.T. Vigne<sup>16</sup>

After Martund, the old ruin at Putun is perhaps the best specimen of the square ruined Hindu temple to be found in the valley. The walls and colonnade of the peristyle are no longer in existence, and the interior of the remaining building, with its well carved and graceful figures of Vishnu and Luchmi, are well worth the inspection of the traveller, being scarcely inferior to those at Martund.

## B. CAVE TEMPLES

### 1. Carli: 'One of the most magnificent chambers I ever saw', Maria Graham<sup>17</sup>

...we almost fancied ourselves in a Gothic cathedral. Instead of the low flat roof of the cave of Elephanta, this rises to an astonishing height, with a highly coved roof, supported by twenty-one pillars on each side, and terminating in a semicircle. Opposite to the entrance is a large temple (if I may call it so), not hollowed, with a dome, on which is fixed a huge teak umbrella, as a mark of respect. Without the pillars there is a kind of aisle on each side of about six feet wide, the length of the cave is forty paces, and its breadth is fourteen. Here are no sculptures within the cavern except on the capitals of the pillars. The columns are mostly hexagons, though the number of angles varies; the bases are formed like compressed cushions; the capitals resemble an inverted flower, or a bell, on the top of which are two elephants, with two riders on each; and on several of the columns there are inscriptions in a character not hitherto decyphered. There is a very curious circumstance in this cavern, which is, that the roof is ribbed with teak wood, cut to fit the cove exactly, and supported by teeth in the timber fitting to corresponding holes in the rock; I imagine this to be a precaution against the destruction of this beautiful work by monsoon rains. The cave of Carli is really one of the most magnificent chambers I ever saw, both as to proportion and workmanship. It is situated near the top of a wooded mountain, commanding one of the finest prospects in the world; its reservoirs cut, like itself, out of the living rock, overflow with the purest water, and the country around it is fertile enough to supply every thing in abundance for human subsistence. The cave is a temple, and on each side there are corridors, with cells proper for the residence of priests and their families. But the most laboured part of the work is the portico of the temple. One-third of its height is filled up by a variety of figures, one of which, in a dancing posture, is remarkable for gracefulness of design, and the ends are occupied to the same height by gigantic elephants; above these is a cornice of reeds, bound together by fillets at equal distances, and the space



over it is filled by small arched niches, finished with the same cornice. The center is occupied by a horseshoe arch, with a pointed moulding above, and below there is a square door of entrance to the cave. To protect the portico from the injuries of the weather, a rude screen was left at the entrance part of which has fallen in; before it there is an enormous pillar crowned with three animals and now overgrown with moss and grass.

The difference between the cavern temples of Carli and Elephanta is striking. Here are no personifications of the deity, no separate cells for secret rites; and the religious opinions which consecrated them are no less different. The cave of Carli is a temple dedicated to the religion of the Jines [Jains], a sect whose antiquity is believed by some of the greater than that of the Brahminical faith, from which their tenets are essentially different, though many of their customs agree entirely with those of the Bramins, as might be expected from natives of the same country.

## **2. Elephanta Caves: 'A thousand fantastic shapes,' Anna Harriette Leonowens<sup>18</sup>**

The principal cave is of great extent, excavated out of the solid rock; the colossal columns of the portico seem to hold up the mountain above them. On either side of the entrance great creepers come down in heavy masses over the mountain. Rows and rows of columns handsomely ornamented appear within, growing beautifully less in the distance and vanishing amid gloomy shadows and a thousand fantastic shapes.... The massiveness and strength of the pillars, which find their deep foundations in the earth below, supporting the elephant-shaped mountain above, is rendered more and more striking by the thousand and one scenes of Hindoo, and particularly Saivic, mythology, in part solemn and majestic, in part grotesque and absurd, that fill every part of the walls; gods and goddesses, heroes and monsters, almost stand out of the rocks.... Enormous creepers and trees have forced themselves through certain cracks and crevices in the mountain, and the whole scene is very wild and pagan; which enhances the beauty and mysterious appearance of the caves.

## **3. Kanheri Caves, Bishop Heber<sup>19</sup>**

The principal curiosities of Salsette, and those which were our main object in this little tour, are the cave temples of Kennery. These are, certainly, in every way remarkable from their number, their beautiful situation, their elaborate carving, and their marked connection with Buddh and his religion. The caves are scattered over two sides of a high rocky hill, at many different elevations, and of various sizes and forms. Most of them appear to have been places of habitation for monks or hermits. One very beautiful apartment of a square form, its walls covered with sculpture, and surrounded internally by a



broad stone bench, is called "the durbar," but I should rather guess had been a school. Many have deep and well-carved cisterns attached to them, which, even in this dry season, were well supplied with water...

On the East side of the portico is a colossal statue of Buddh, with his hands raised in the attitude of benediction, and the screen which separates the vestibule from the temple is covered, immediately above the dodo, with a row of male and female figures, nearly naked, but not indecent and carved with considerable spirit, which apparently represent dancers. In the centre is large door, and, above it, three windows contained in a semicircular arch, so like those which are seen over the entrance of Italian Churches, that I fully supposed them to be an addition to the original plan by the Portuguese, who are said, I know not on what ground, to have used this cave as a Church, till I found a similar and still more striking window of the same kind in the great cave of Carlee. Within, the apartment is, I should conceive, fifty feet long by twenty, an oblong square terminated by a semicircle, and surrounded on every side, but that of the entrance, with a colonnade of octagonal pillars. Of these the twelve on each side nearest the entrance are ornamented with carved bases and capitals, in the style usual in Indian temples. The rest are unfinished.

In the centre of the semicircle, and with a free walk all around it, is a mass of rock left solid, but carved externally like a dome, and so as to bear a strong general likeness to our Saviour's sepulchre, as it is now chiseled away and enclosed in St. Helena's Church at Jerusalem. On the top of the dome is a sort of spreading ornament like the capital of a column. It is, apparently, intended to support something, and I was afterwards told at Carlee, where such an ornament, but of greater size, is also found, that a large gilt umbrella used to spring from it. This solid dome appears to be the usual symbol of Buddhist adoration, and, with its umbrella ornament, may be traced in the Shoo-Madoo of Pegu, and other more remote structures of the same faith. Though it is different in its form and style of ornament from the lingam, I cannot help thinking it has been originally intended to represent the same popular object of that almost universal idolatry, which Scripture, with good reason, describes as "uncleanness and abomination."

#### **4. Bamian, Charles Masson<sup>20</sup>**

We are encamped at Bamian opposite to the idols and caves, so much the objects of European curiosity...As my stay at this time was brief, I could do little more than visit and examine the antiquities, with the view of ascertaining what they were, – a necessary step prior to speculating on their origin and character....

I had discovered, in the niche of the superior idol, a six-lettered inscription, with which, and the other facts I collected, I returned to Kabul.



Subsequently, the discovery of a coin of a well-marked series, with a legend, plainly in similar characters, encouraged me to attempt the removal of the mystery enshrouding the remains, especially as the coin presented the bust of a sovereign identical with one figured amongst the paintings in the niche of the second idol as to size, unquestionably establishing a connexion between them. I therefore drew up a Memoir on the *Antiquities of Bamian*, which I forwarded through my friend, Sir Henry Pottinger, to the late ever-to-be-lamented James Prinsep, and which was inserted in his *Journal of the Asiatic Society in Bengal*.

In it I pointed out that there were now in existence three large idols, with the niches in which many other smaller ones had once stood. That every idol had its suit of caves, amongst which some had domes or vaulted roofs, being, as I supposed, temples. I further showed, that besides the mass of caves obviously connected with the idols, there were certain apertures in the face of the rock, now inaccessible, which never could have been intended for dwelling of the living, but were, probably, the repositories of the dead. I could but remember that the corpses of the older Persian monarchs were consigned to such receptacles, and I thence drew an inference bearing materially on the character of the locality. I have since observed, not without satisfaction, that Abul Fazil notes, that in his time the inhabitants showed a corpse in one of the caves, whose state of preservation, and period of deposit, were matters of wonder and conjecture to them. No doubt an embalmed corpse of an ancient sovereign of the country, or other illustrious person deposited here....

I have recently visited the Buddhist temples in the island of Salsette, and certainly there can be no doubt of the resemblance between the colossal figures of Buddha in them, and those of the Bamian niches. They are, in like manner, erect, clothed in the same drapery, and stand in the same attitude. Amongst the innumerable smaller seated figures of Buddha at Salsette the attitudes are only three, those of meditation, prayer, and teaching or expounding. The colossal and erect figures invariably represent him in the last, or teaching attitude, with one arm extended, while the other supports the drapery of his robes, which attitudes is that of the Bamian idols. The latter, in common with those of Salsette, have what have been called "pendulous ears," but an examination of the Salsette images enabled me to verify, beyond doubt, that the ears have been formed with due care as to their proportions, the seeming excess being merely occasioned by the rings affixed to them, which is manifest in all of them when closely inspected, but palpably so in some instances where circular rings have been substituted for the ordinary oblong and lengthened ones.



## C. PALACES

### 1. Palace of the Pandavas, William Moorcroft<sup>21</sup>

On the following day we rode to Islamabad, and on this occasion visited some remarkable remains in its vicinity, on the top of the low ridge or platform formerly noticed, and which is called Karawe Matan. The summit of this was for the most part perfectly level, and commonly a mile in breadth, and according to the report of the people of the country, was formerly the site of a large city, the capital of Kashmir. Scattered over the ground, indeed, we found fragments of mortar and bricks, but no relics of any note till we came to the end of the mound, where, at a distance of about two miles from Islamabad, stood the ruins we were in quest of. These from their elevated situation were widely conspicuous, and were of very remarkable extent and character. Like most of the architectural remains in Kashmir, they are termed Khana Panduwa, a house or palace of the Pandus. They consisted of a main building in the center of an open space, surrounded by a wall. The central structure was composed of a body and two small wings, the former about fifty-six feet long by twenty-six feet wide, running east and west, and twenty-eight feet high, was divided into two chambers of different dimensions; the western face comprised a large, lofty, arched portal, with four carved pilasters, two on each side; the eastern front had a wide recess, occupied by a false doorway, with an ornamental arch, and on the sides of which were pilasters; similar recesses decorated the northern and southern ends: opposite to these extremities also were the two wings or chambers, connected formerly by a colonnade with the center. They were built with massive walls, but the interior was not above six feet square. On the inside of the enclosing wall formerly extended a series of columns, forming a sort of portico all round, and a series of small chambers or cells ran along its outer face. The whole was constructed of stones of immense size and weight, embellished with elaborate sculpture. The roofs had generally fallen in, but where remaining, were of large flat slabs of stone. The walls were for the most part entire, their massiveness having resisted not only time and earthquakes, but the assaults of man: one of the rulers of Kashmir, Sultan Hamadan, is said to have attempted in vain to undermine the edifice, or to destroy it by fire. It is fortunate he was not acquainted with the use of gunpowder. In its present condition the palace of the Pandus is a precious specimen of ancient art, and deserves a foremost place amongst the remains of Hindu antiquity.

### 2. Jaipur palace, Bishop Heber<sup>22</sup>

The palace, with its gardens, occupies about one-sixth part of the city. It presents to the streets an extremely high front of seven or eight stories,



diminishing in the centre to something like a pediment, and flanked by two towers of equal height topped with open cupolas. Within are two spacious courts and many smaller ones, surrounded by cloisters of stone pillars, except in the verandahs leading to the principal rooms, which are of marble. The gardens, which I was first taken to see, are extensive, and, in their way, extremely beautiful, full of fountains, cypresses, palm-trees, and flowering shrubs, with a succession of terraces and alcoves, none of them, singly taken, in good taste, but altogether extremely rich and striking. Two very large and handsome tanks terminate the grounds towards the north. The garden is surrounded by a high embattled wall, having a terrace at the top like that of Chester, and beneath it a common passage, (as one of the ministers of state, who accompanied us, told me,) for the Zennanah to walk in....

The ascents throughout the palace are not by stairs, but by inclined planes of very easy slope, and certainly less fatiguing than the European style. The passages are all narrow and mean, and the object in the whole building seems more to surprise by the number, the intricacy, and detail of the rooms and courts, than by any apartments of large size and magnificent proportions. A great part of the windows are glazed with small panes of stained or plain glass in latticed frames of white marble. The stained glass was said to be from Venice. These upper rooms, which are in fact a part of the Zennanah, have their floors chiefly covered with stuffed white cotton quilts, over which, in certain places, sitrings are placed, and, in the more costly rooms, small Persian carpets. There are very strong wooden doors in different parts of the building whose hinges and locks are as rude as those of a prison, but the suites of apartments themselves are only divided by large striped curtains hung over the arched doorways. The ceilings are generally low, and the rooms dark and close; both the walls and ceilings are, however, splendidly carved and painted, and some of the former are entirely composed of small looking-glasses in fantastic frames of chunam mixed with talc, which have the appearance of silver till closely examined. The subjects of the paintings are almost entirely mythological, and their style of colouring, their attitudes, and the general gloomy silence and intricacy of the place reminded me frequently to Belzoni's model of the Egyptian tomb.

After a long suite of these strange rooms, we were taken into a very striking and beautiful apartment, where breakfast was prepared for us. It was a small pavilion with arches on either side, opening into two small cloistered courts, the one filled by a beautiful cold bath about thirty feet square, the other by a little flower garden divided, *parterre* wise, with narrow winding paths of white marble, with a *jet d'eau* in every winding, to the number, I should think, of fifteen or twenty, which remained playing all the while we were at breakfast. Nothing could be prettier or more refreshing than the sight.



and sound of these tiny fountains, though I did not think the effect improved when all at once several of the principal ones began to throw up water tinged with some yellow dye. It was evidently much admired by the natives, and reminded me of "the golden water," which, together with "the talking bird" and the "singing tree," cost the princess in the Arabian tale so many labours to obtain.

### 3. Palace at Amer by Jai Singh, Bishop Heber<sup>23</sup>

...we reached the town, which almost entirely consisted of temples, and had few inhabitants but grim and ghastly Yogis, with their hair in elf-knots and their faces covered with chalk, sitting naked and hideous, like so many ghouls, amid the tombs and ruined houses. A narrow winding street led us though these abodes of superstition, under a dark shade of peepul trees, till we found ourselves on another steep ascent paved with granite and leading to the palace. We wound along the face of the hill, through, I think, three gothic gateways, alighted in a large moss-grown quadrangle surrounded by what seemed to be barracks and stables, and followed our guides up a broad and long flight of steps through another richly-ornamented gateway, into the interior courts of the building, which contain one very noble hall of audience, a pretty little garden with fountains, and a long succession of passages, cloisters, alcoves and small and intricate apartments, many of them extremely beautiful, and enjoying from their windows, balconies, and terraces, one of the most striking prospects which can be conceived. The carving in stone and marble, and the inlaid flowers and ornaments in some of these apartments, are equal to those at Delhi and Agra, and only surpassed by the beauties of the Taje-mahal. My companions, none of whom had visited Umeer before, all declared that, as a whole, it was superior to the castle of Delhi. For myself, I have seen many royal palaces containing larger and more stately rooms, – many, the architecture of which in a purer taste, and some which have covered a greater extent of ground, (though in *this*, if the fortress on the hill be included, Umeer will rank, I think, above Windsor,) but for varied and picturesque effect, for richness of carving, for wild beauty of situation, for the number and romantic singularity of the apartments, and the strangeness of finding such a building in such a place and country, I am able to compare nothing with Umeer; and this, too, was the work of Jye Singh! The ornaments are in the same style, though in a better state, than those of his palace at Jyepoor, and the size and number of the apartments are also similar. A greater use has been made of stained glass here, or else, from the inaccessible height of the window, the glass has remained in better preservation. The building is in good repair, but has a solitary and deserted aspect; and as our guide, with his bunch of keys, unlocked one iron clenched door after another, and led us over terraces and up towers, down



steep, dark, sloping passages, and through a long succession of silent courts, and dim vaulted chambers, seen only through coloured glass, and made more gorgeously gloomy by their carving, gilding, and mirrors, the idea of an enchanted castle occurred, I believe, to us all; and I could not help thinking what magnificent use Ariosto or Sir Walter Scott would have made of such a building. After all we saw only part of it. Higher up the hill was another grim-looking ward, with few external windows, but three or four elegantly-carved kiosks projecting from its roof, and a few cypresses peeping over its walls, which they said was the Zennanah, and not allowed to be seen; and above this again, but communicating by a succession of gates and turrets, was the castle which I have mentioned, grimmer and darker still, with high towers and machicollated battlements, with a very few ornamented windows, many narrow loop-holes, and one tall minaret rising above the whole cluster. The interior of this, of course, was not shewn; indeed, it is what the government of Jyepoor considers as its last resource. The public treasure used to be laid up here; and here, it is said, are many state-prisoners, whose number is likely to be increased if the present rule continues.

#### **4. Fatehpur Sikri, Bishop Heber<sup>24</sup>**

...We rambled some time among its courts,...There are four buildings particularly worthy of notice, one a small but richly-ornamented house, which is shewn as the residence of Beerbal the Emperor's favourite minister, whom the Mussulmans accuse of having infected him with the strange religious notions, with which, in the latter part of his life, he sought to inoculate his subjects. Another is a very beautiful octagonal pavilion in the corner of the court, which appears to have been the Zennanah, and was variously stated to us to have been the Emperor's private study, or the bed-chamber of one of his wives who was a daughter of the Sultan of Constantinople. It has three large windows filed with an exquisite tracery of white marble, and all its remaining wall is carved with trees, bunches of grapes, and the figures of different kinds of birds and beasts, of considerable merit in their execution, but the two last disfigured by the bigotry of Aurungzebe, who, as is well known, sought to make amends for his own abominable cruelty and wickedness towards his father and brothers, by a more than usual zeal for the traditions and observances of Islam. The third is a little building which, if its traditional destination be correct, I wonder Aurungzebe allowed to stand. It consists merely of shrine or canopy supported by four pillars, which the Mussulman ciceroni of the place pretend was devoted by Acbar to the performance of Magical rites. Whatever its use may have been, it is not without beauty. The fourth is a singular pavilion, in the center of which is a pillar or stone pulpit richly carved, approached by four stone galleries from different sides of the room, on which the Emperor



used to sit on certain occasions of state, while his subjects were admitted below to present their petitions. It is a mere capriccio, with no merit except its carving, but is remarkable as being one of the most singular buildings I have seen, and commanding from its terraced roof a very advantageous view of the greater part of the city, and a wide extent of surrounding country.

Of this last much appears to have been laid out in an extensive lake, of which the dam is still to be traced, and the whole hill on which the palace stands bears marks of terraces and gardens, to irrigate which an elaborate succession of wells, cisterns, and wheels appears to have been contrived adjoining the great mosque, and forcing up the water nearly to the height of its roof. The cisterns are still useful as receptacles for rain-water, but the machinery is long since gone to decay. On the whole, Futtehpour is one of the most interesting places which I have seen in India, and it was to me the more so, because, as it happened, I had heard little about it, and was by no means prepared to expect buildings of so much magnitude and splendour.

### **5. Water Palace, Mandu, Emma Roberts<sup>25</sup>**

The tumults and wars which during a long period distracted the Rajpoot states, have left the still beautiful and once flourishing city of Mandoo in desolation and ruin. It stands on the flat tabular platform of a mountain belonging to the Vindhyan range, but which is separated from the neighbouring hills by a wide chasm – one of those gigantic works which, though a freak of nature, bears a close resemblance to the designs of man. The appearance is that of an artificial ditch, of enormous dimensions. Over this, to the north, is a broad causeway, which at some seasons forms the only approach, the surrounding ravine being filled with water during the rains. This passage is guarded by three gateways, still entire, placed at a considerable distance from each other; the last being on the summit of the hill, which is ascended by a winding road cut through the rock. The masses of ruined buildings which spring amidst a redundance of vegetation, apparently the unchecked growth of ages, somewhat resemble those of the city of Gour in Bengal, where the forest has intruded upon the courts and halls of palaces; but the buildings at Mandoo are upon a more splendid scale, and they occupy a better situation upon an elevated height; both are almost equally left to the exclusive dominion of wild and savage beasts...

The prevailing style of the architecture in Affghan, and some of the specimens are the finest which that splendid race have left in India; the material is chiefly a fine calcareous red-stone, but the mausoleum of Hossein Shah, one of the most remarkable relics still existing, is composed entirely of white marble, brought from the banks of the Nerbudda. The Tehaz Ka Mahal, ship, or as we have rendered it, water-palace is erected upon an isthmus, which



divides two large tanks of water from each other; the situation is exceedingly picturesque, and the calm, quiet beauty of the building, particularly when reflected from the glassy surface of the mirror, which stretches itself below on either side, affords an object of delightful though pensive contemplation to the traveller, who has come suddenly upon this wreck of former splendour.

## **6. Palace at Deeg, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>26</sup>**

A handsome, but ruinous gate, of the time of the highest splendour of the Mogul empire, leads into Deeg, which is otherwise quite open, and contains a neglected clay citadel, and some colossal Mogul ruins, which resemble those of Delhi. On the other hand, there is a palace built by Runjeet Singh, which is one of the finest Hindoo edifices of modern date. On my arrival there, I was received by the governor of Deeg, and the principal persons in the town, who offered to show me the palace and the gardens.

The palace, which is situated in a pleasant fruit and flower garden has a very fine façade, and projecting wings. There are several open, vaulted colonnades, in the Mogul Hindoo style, which are closed with curtains. Great care has been bestowed on the water workes; there are no less than 600 fountains, in the most varied forms; but as eight days are requisite to make them play, I was obliged to content myself with looking at the hundreds fountains of the front basin. From the center arcade of the principal building is a complete view of these waterworks and the garden in its whole length; and here a seat was placed that I might enjoy this interesting sight, as well as the splendid show of flowers...

## **7. Constantia, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>27</sup>**

In a desolate mangoe-garden, four miles to the south of the city, near to the river, is a large, shapeless palace, called Constantia, which was erected by Claude Martin, the Frenchman, at an expense of 150,000/ sterling. We rode to it the following morning, before sunrise accompanied by some horsemen. Constantia, which is five stories high, is built of marble, sandstone, and bricks; it is a medley of the French, Italian, and Greek styles, combined with Hindoo and Mahometan architecture and has two towers, which stand on either side of the platform: the battlements and towers are adorned with colossal lions. The apartments, which are small and dark, ornamented with looking glasses, shells, and various kinds of Italian sculptures, and bas-reliefs, of plaster of Paris and marble. It bears the following inscription: "*Labore et Constantia.*"...

This extensive palace is now in the possession of the King, who allows the English to live in it at their pleasure. From the summit of the towers, there is a very wide and noble prospect: to the south spreads the valley of the Goomty, bordered by corn-fields, jungles, and woods; and to the north lies the large



handsome city, to which the minarets, and the gilded and white cupolas of the numerous palaces and sepulchres, give inexpressible splendour. In front of the palace of Constantia, is a reservoir, with a column forty feet high, rising in the center, and the eye is refreshed by the bright colours of a pretty flower-garden and the dark green of the mangoes, which flourish all around.

Next to this is an extensive domain called the Dilkusha Park, "The King's Delight;" it is an artificial wilderness, well stocked with antelopes, peacocks, and jackals. In this park is a small country-house, belonging to the King, which was built by Mr. Ousley, an Englishman, who resided here as aide-de-camp to Naseer ud Dowlah. The apartments are fitted up in the French style, and are ornamented with indifferent oil paintings. When we had viewed it, we rode home along a fine road lately made through the park.

## D. FORTS

### 1. The fort of Chunar, William Hodges<sup>28</sup>

The fort of Chunar is situated on the Ganges, near twenty miles above the city of Benares: it is built on a rock, which is fortified all round by a wall, and towers at various distances. At that end overlooking the river is situated the citadel, which has formerly been strong. This fort is said to be of the highest antiquity, and originally built by the Hindoos.

In the citadel there is an altar, consisting of a plain black marble slab, on which the tutelary deity of the place is traditionally at all times supposed to be seated, except from sunrise until nine o'clock in the morning, when he is at Benares, during which time, from the superstition of the Hindoos, attacks may be made with a prospect of success. In various parts of the fort there are old sculptures of the Hindoo divinities, now nearly defaced by time. There are likewise on the gates some old Persian inscriptions, mentioning in whose reign, and by whom, the fort was repaired and strengthened.

This has always been considered as a post of great consequence upon the Ganges, from its insulated situation, projecting forwards to a considerable extent, and being of considerable height. It is besieged by the English in the war carried on, during the years 1764 and 1765, against the late Nabob Sujah ul Dowlah when he joined Meer Cossim, and was gallantly defended by its commandant, an Abyssinian in the service of that prince.

### 2. Gwalior Fort, William Hodges<sup>29</sup>

The fort of Gwalior is seated on the top of a considerable mountain, rising from a perfect flat country. To the west are some considerable hills, among which is the pass of Narwah, leading to Ougion, the capital of the



Malwah country, at present possessed by Madajee Scindia. The rock on which the fort is situated is on every side perpendicular, either by nature or art. At the north-west end is the citadel and a palace, and a chain of seven gates leading to the town at the foot of the mountain. The town, and indeed the whole base of the mountain, is surrounded by a wall; and the place has been generally considered, by Europeans, as the Gibraltar of the East, as well for its natural situation as for the works that have been constructed for its security. The town is large, and contains some few remains of good houses, and a mosque.

During the time of the Mogul government this place was the state prison, where the obnoxious branches of the Royal Family were always confined, and where they were allowed, for their amusement, a large menagerie of beasts, such as lions, tigers, &c. On the top of the mountain, I am told, there are considerable cultivated plains, and a good supply of water; insomuch, that a vigilant and active governor might defend it against almost any number of enemies, who could only attack it from below.

This ancient and celebrated fortress is situated in the heart of Hindostan Proper, being about eighty miles to the south of Agra, the ancient capital of the empire, and one hundred and thirty from the nearest part of the Ganges. From Calcutta it is, by the nearest route, upwards of eight hundred miles; nine hundred and ten by the ordinary road; and about two hundred and eight from the British frontiers. In the ancient division of the empire it is classed in the subah of Agra, and is often mentioned in history as the capital of a district which produced a large revenue. We first read of it in the History of Hindostan, in the year 1008, and, during the two following centuries, it was twice reduced by famine. It is probable that it must, in all ages, have been a military post of the utmost consequence, both from its situation in respect to the capital, and from the peculiarity of its site, which was generally deemed impregnable. With respect to its relative position, it must be considered, that it stands on the principal road leading from Agra to Malwah, Guzerat, and the Decan; and that near the place where it enters the hilly tract, which advances from Bundelcund, Malwah, and Agimere, to a parallel with the river Jumna, throughout the greatest part of its course. From these circumstances, as well as from its natural and acquired advantages as a fortress, the possession of it was deemed as necessary to the ruling emperors of Hindostan, as Dover Castle might be to the Saxon and Norman Kings of England.

### **3. Allahabad Fort, George Forster<sup>30</sup>**

The fort of Allahabad, which is built of stone, occupies a large space of ground, and has been amply supplied with superb and useful buildings whether for promoting the pleasures or conveniences of life...

In the palace yard stands a round pillar of about forty feet high, consisting



of an entire stone, which coarsely resembles the porphyry, and seems covered with an inscription, in the ancient Hindoo character; but the letters are so much effaced and impaired by the ravages of time which, my friend, spares not even marble, that they are become illegible. The erection of this monument is attributed to Beemshyne [Bhimsen], who, your Bramin will tell you, was in his day a powerful chief, and one of the principal warriors in the Mhah Bhaut [Mahabharat]. But as a devout believer, you must not repose too much faith on the Bramin's account of the era in which this Beemshyne is said to have flourished; for he will tell you that our great progenitor was not even heard of in those days. The Mahometans, who as furiously destroyed every monument and curious vestige not expressive of their doctrine, as they were actuated by a blind zeal in its propagation and support, have endeavoured to claim the construction of this pillar, and over the Hindoo record, they have engraved the names of many of their emperors, since the time of Babr.

#### **4. Lahore Fort, William Moorcroft<sup>31</sup>**

Lahore is surrounded by a brick wall about thirty feet high, which extends for about seven miles, and is continuous with the Fort. The latter, in which the Raja resides, is surrounded by a wall of no great strength, with loop-holes for musketry; a branch of the Ravi washes the foot of its northern face, but it has no moat on either of the remaining sides. The palace within this inclosure, called the Saman Burj, which is of many stories, is entirely faced with a kind of porcelain enamel, on which processions and combats of men and animals are depicted. Many of these are as perfect as when first placed in the wall. Several of the old buildings are in ruins, others are entire, and throw into shade the meaner structures of more recent date. Ranjit Singh has cleared away some of the rubbish, and has repaired or refitted some of the ruined buildings of Jehangir and Shah-jehan; but his alterations have not always been made with good feeling or taste. The great square and buildings of the principal mosque have been converted into a place of exercise for his Sipahi infantry, and he has stripped the dome of the mausoleum of Asof Jah, the brother of Nurjehan Begam, of its white marbles, to apply them to the erection of some insignificant apartments in the garden-court of the Mosque. The Diwan Am, or general hall of audience, is a long apartment supported by many pillars. The Diwan Khas or private audience-hall, is a suite of small chambers offering nothing remarkable.

#### **5. The celebrated fortress of Attok, William Moorcroft<sup>32</sup>**

An order from Ranjit Singh procured us admission into the celebrated fortress of Attok, but we were not allowed to see much of its interior. Proceeding from the serai to the gateway on the north, along a perfectly good road,



unprovided with any defences, we entered into a small projecting court, about twenty yards long, in which Suja-al-mulk was confined by Jehandad Khan, after he was driven from Afghanistan. From hence we passed through another gate into the bazaar, a narrow lane of shops, chiefly for the sale of provisions, and along this we were conducted to the opposite or southern gateway, which opened upon the side of the hill immediately above the ferry over the Indus. The gates of the fort are lofty and large, and the walls are of the same description as those of Rotas, thick, crenated, and pierced with loopholes: the direction of the bazaar is parallel with the river, and the bazaar is four hundred paces long: between it and the river front are houses, and at the south-west angle a bastion projects into the stream: on the side of the bazaar, farthest from the river, the fort contracts and extends in the form of an irregular parallelogram, about five hundred yards to the east. The interior is discernible from the right bank of the river, and the eastern end is commanded by hills of greater elevation than that on which it stands. Opposite to its southern face, and divided from it by a ravine which descends to the bank of the river, stands a petty village, on a level with the gateway. On the right bank of the river, and within musket-shot of the southern postern of the fort, is the village of Khairabad, defended on the west by a mud redoubt, and by several small stone buildings, intended as stations for infantry, erected on different points of a ridge of low hills, about a hundred yards to the westward; the most remote is within the range of artillery from the fort, and perfectly commands the latter. This is the case, however, with even the road to Peshawar, on the Khairabad side, and it would not be necessary to erect batteries on the hills. The fort of Attok, however impregnable it may be to Sikhs or Afghans, could oppose no resistance whatever to Europeans engineers.

## **6. Rohtas Fort, William Moorcroft<sup>33</sup>**

Leaving Jelum on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, we marched across a cultivated plain in a north-westerly direction, to the foot of the mound on which stands the celebrated fort of Rotas, and traversed a narrow stony defile with the fort close on the left, the base of the walls being about sixty or seventy feet higher than the pathway. The killadar refused to admit us to see the fortress; but riding along its western face, we found several practicable breaches in the walls, by one of which we ascended and entered an abandoned outwork. The structure was found to be most massive, the walls, of stone cemented with mortar, being in some places thirty feet thick. They were crenated throughout, and provided with a double row of loop-holes. The outwork we had scaled seemed intended to protect an immense bhauli or well of masonry. Passages of great breadth wound round it to the bottom, communicating with it by arched openings into its sides, and they led to the water's edge in so many places, that from fifty to



a hundred persons might draw water at once. From this spot we entered into the body of the fort, and ascended the highest part of the parapet without attracting observation. The interior of the fort extends about two miles and a half. It is of a long, narrow form, and its two sides and eastern end rest upon the edges of ravines which separate it from a table-land of equal elevation as the hill on which it stands. The western face of the hill has the Gham rivulet running along its foot, the bed of which abounds with quicksands, and must be dangerous to ford, at least in the rains. The Sikhs have erected a small mud fort within the principal gateway. Near the fort are a serai, said to have been constructed by Aurangzeb, and a garden, enclosed by a wall, attributed to Shir Shah. There was formerly a Persian inscription over one of the gateways of Rotas, recording the date of its construction by Shir Shah, and denouncing an imprecation upon any of his successors who should suffer it to fall into decay. Zeman Shah, it is reported, took offence at the tenor of the inscription, and commanded it to be effaced. The fort is said to have been erected by Shir Shah to curb the predatory incursions of the Ghikars...

## 7. Agra Fort, Honoria Lawrence<sup>34</sup>

...At gunfire then, we started to visit the fort, one of the marvellous monuments left by Akbar. Here we are again in a wilderness of sandstone and white marble. The place is quite strong enough for all picturesque purposes, and I suppose is really able to resist anything but artillery. I do not affect military knowledge, but the fort wall gave me the same idea as that round the town of Delhi, of being the enclosure of a park, rather than a fortification. Long unbroken lines of wall stretching from turret to turret, and bastion to bastion. One hall the *Dewan Am*, or hall of public audience, as *Dewan Khass* means the place of private audience, is a splendid room now used as an arsenal. Here Lord Ellenborough gave his grand entertainments last year, and here stand the much talked of *Somnath* gates with their drapery of scarlet and gold, the flags taken in China and other trophies. The gates are in a much less crumbled and shattered state than I expected to see, the carving is very fine and the upper part and frame are in good repair...

## E. MOSQUES

### 1. Juma Masjid, Fatehpur Sikri, Bishop Heber<sup>35</sup>

The approach to Futtehpour is striking; it is surrounded by a high stone wall, with battlements and round towers, like the remaining part of the city walls at Oxford. Within this is a wide extent of ruined houses and mosques, interspersed with fields cultivated with rice and mustard, and a few tamarind



trees, and nearly in the middle, on a high ridge of rocky hills, is a range of ruinous palaces, serais, and other public buildings, in the best style of Mussulman architecture; and to form the center of the picture, a noble mosque, in good repair, and in dimensions equal, I should think, to the Juma Musjeed of Delhi...

We found our tents pitched among the ruins and rubbish, about a bow-shot from the foot of the hill and in full view of the great gate of the mosque, which is approached by the noblest flight of steps I ever saw. The morning was still cool, and we determined to see the curiosities without loss of time. The steps of which I have spoken lead to a fine arch surmounted by a lofty tower; thence we pass into a quadrangle of about five hundred feet square, with a very lofty and majestic cloister all round, a large mosque surmounted by three fine domes of white marble on the left hand, and opposite to the entrance two tombs of very elaborate workmanship, of which that to the right contains several monuments of the imperial family; that to the left a beautiful chapel of white marble, the shrine of Sheikh Soliman, who had the good fortune to be a saint as well as a statesman.

The impression which this whole view produced on me will be appreciated when I say, that there is no quadrangle either in Oxford or Cambridge fit to be compared with it, either in size, or majestic proportions, or beauty of architecture. It is kept in substantial repair by the British Government, and its grave and solid style makes this an easier task than the intricate and elaborate inlaid work of Secundra and the Taje-mahal. The interior of the mosque itself is fine, and in the same simple character of grandeur, but the height of the portal tower, and the magnificence of the quadrangle had raised my expectations too high, and I found that these were the greatest as well as the most striking beauties of Futtehpoor.

## F. TOMBS

### 1. Tombs of Amir Khusrau and Muhammad Shah, Thomas Twining<sup>36</sup>

The first was the tomb of Meer Khosroo Dehooley, the beautiful symmetry of which was delineated in the choicest white marble, and was still admirable amidst the partial degradation which impaired it. I next saw the durgah of Nizamaddeen and the mausoleum of Mahomed Shah Padshah.

### 2. Tomb of Princess Jahanara, Thomas Twining<sup>37</sup>

Not far from these monuments, I saw with deeper interest that of the Princess Jehannara, the Euphrasia of Hindostan. She was the eldest daughter of the Emperor Shah Jehan, and the voluntary companion and chief solace of



his long confinement in the fortress of Agra. [A] Persian inscription, beautifully traced in letters of black marble, was inlaid in the white marble of which the tomb was composed...

### **3. Tomb of Baba Wali in Hazara country, William Moorcroft<sup>38</sup>**

Between this and the Serai of Hassan Abdal the valley is somewhat contracted, although the hills are low: at the foot of one of these is the tomb of the saint from whom the place is named, and who is also known by the more familiar denomination of Baba Wali. It is a square building, containing a tomb of marble, and standing in a walled court...

#### **Miracle wrought by Nanak**

Beyond the tomb was a spot on the edge of a rill, trickling from a block of stone, supposed to have been sanctified by a miracle wrought there by Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith. Nanak coming to the place fatigued and thirsty, thought he had a claim upon the hospitality of his brother ascetic, and invoked the spirit of Baba Wali for a cup of water. The Mohammedan saint, indignant at the presumption of an unbeliever, replied to his application by throwing a stone at him of several tons weight. Nanak caught the missile in his hand, and then placed it on the ground, leaving the impression of his fingers upon its hard substance: at the same time he commanded water to flow from it, and this constituted the rill here observable, along which were a number of Sikh fanatics who had come in pilgrimage. This story is curious, not only as a specimen of the credulity of the people, but as the probable invention of a very recent date. A few years only have elapsed since the place was in the possession of the Afghans, whose fierce Mohammedanism would have tolerated no Sikh pilgrims nor shrines within their boundary...

### **4. Ziarat of Shah Hamadan, William Moorcroft<sup>39</sup>**

Having remained a day at Shupien, we proceeded on our journey, and at a short distance came to the Ziarat of Shah Hamadan, remarkable for a large flat stone which it contains, and which is an object of profound veneration to devout Musselmans. It is said that when the saint had arrived on the crest of Pir Panchal, on his way to Kashmir, his horse was too much fatigued to proceed, and the Shah was at a loss what to do. In this dilemma a piece of the rock volunteered to convey him to the plain, and this stone is the carriage that presented itself. Part of it, supposed to be the impression of his foot, has been completely polished by the contact of thousands of the hands and lips of the faithful.



**5. Tomb of Zainul Abidin, G.T. Vigne<sup>40</sup>**

The next building to be noticed in point of antiquity is the tomb of Budshah, or Zyn-ul-ab-u-Din. He lived in 1422, and was the eighth and most renowned of the Musalman monarchs of Kashmir. Before the invasion of Timur Lung, the son of Budshah was sent as envoy to Samarkand, to present his salaam, and Timur sent back with him to Kashmir some paper, glass, or carpet makers. Shawls, it is said, were first made in Budshah's reign. He built the old palace at Lank in the Wulur Lake, and the Karywahs of Zynapur and the Pergunah of Zyn-a-Ghyr are named after him.

The tomb is of brick; in figure, octagonal; ornamented with Saracenic arches, and surmounted by a single dome, surrounded by four smaller ones. It appears to be the earliest specimen of the style that had escaped from its place of refuge at Byzantium during the dark ages. The dome reminded me of that on Justinian's church of St. Sophia at Trebizond.

**6. Hazrat Bal, G.T. Vigne<sup>41</sup>**

On the left is the village of Hazrit Bal, or the Prophet's hair, so called because a single hair of Mohomet's beard is preserved there in a bottle, and exhibited on every fete-day to the people. Numerous boats of various sizes are at that time ranged along the stone quay on the border of the open space intervening between the lake and the sacred edifice in which the relic is preserved. Sikhs, Hindus, and Kashmirians of both sexes, and of all ranks and ages, are there for the purpose of seeing and being seen; the Musalmans crowd around the door from which the sacred phial is exhibited; and I have seen and heard them breathing forth their aspirations, whilst they have touched the glass and pressed their lips and forehead against it, with looks of the most extreme awe and veneration. There is also a tree near the Hazrit Bal, I forget of what kind, but I think an acacia, which is said to have been brought as a cutting from Mecca. Five or six fairs are held at the Hazrit Bal in the course of the year.

**7. Shrine of Nuruddin, G.T. Vigne<sup>42</sup>**

Cherar, containing the shrine of Shah-Nur-u-Din (or the light of the faith) is, by reason of its sanctity, the largest village in the centre of the western side of the valley, between Baramula and Shupeyon. The Musjid built over the tomb is of the usual Kahmirian form, but is, perhaps, better proportioned, and contains more elaborate carving, than any other. Shah Nur-u-Din himself lived a long time ago, and the Shah Sahib told me that his great celebrity was chiefly owing to his having been a Kashmirian by birth. The fakir of Eysh Mekam...was one of his disciples. His tomb is now what the Kashmirians, in Persia, would call a "bisear gurm zearut," literally, a "very warm shrine," and



is the most sacred in the valley. Vows to it, and pilgrimages in performance of vows, are constant; each votary brings an offering of something, either to the shrine or in charity to the fakirs, who are of course numerous in proportion to the advantages and support they derive from such a lucrative system. Cherar is a Kusabah, and contains a bazaar.

### **8. Taj Mahal, Bishop Heber<sup>43</sup>**

I went to see the celebrated Tage-mahal, of which it is enough to say that, after hearing its praises ever since I had been in India, its beauty rather exceeded than fell short of my expectations. There was much, indeed, which I was not prepared for. The surrounding garden, which as well as the Tage itself, is kept in excellent order by Government, with its marble fountains, beautiful cypresses and other trees, and profusion of flowering shrubs, contrasts very finely with the white marble of which the tomb itself is composed, and takes off, by partially concealing it, from that stiffness which belongs more or less to every highly-finished building. The building itself is raised on an elevated terrace of white and yellow marble, and having at its angles four tall minarets of the same material. The Tage contains, as usual, a central hall about as large as the interior of the Ratcliffe library, in which enclosed within a carved screen of elaborate tracery, are the tombs of the Begum Noor-jehan [Mumtaz Mahal], Shahjehan's beloved wife, to whom it was erected, and by her side, but a little raised above her, of the unfortunate Emperor himself. Round this hall are a number of small apartments, corridors, &c. and the windows are carved in lattices of the same white marble with the rest of building, and the screen. The pavement is in alternate squares of white, and, what is called in Europe, sienna marble, the walls, screens, and tombs are covered with flowers and inscriptions, executed in beautiful Mosaic of cornelians, lapis-lazuli, and jasper; and yet, though every thing is finished like an ornament for a drawing-room chimney-piece, the general effect produced is rather solemn and impressive than gaudy. The parts which I like least are the great dome and the minarets. The bulbous swell of the former I think clumsy, and the minarets having nothing to recommend them but their height and the beauty of their materials. But the man must have more criticism than taste or feeling about him, who could allow such imperfections to weigh against the beauties of the Tage-mahal. The Jumna washes one side of the garden, and there are some remains of a bridge which was designed by Shahjehan, with the intention, as the story goes, to build a second Tage of equal beauty for his own separate place of interment, on the opposite side of the river.

### **9. Tomb of Anarkali at Lahore, Charles Masson<sup>44</sup>**

Another remarkable building south of the city, and between it and the



river, is the tomb of Anarkalli, as called, concerning which is the following popular story. Anarkalli (anargul, probably, or the pomegranate blossom) was a very handsome youth, and the favourite attendant of an emperor of Hindustan. When the prince would be in company with ladies of his haram, the favourite page was excluded. It happened, that one day the emperor, seated with his females in an apartment lined with looking-glasses, beheld, from the reflected appearance of Anarkalli, who stood behind him, that he smiled. The monarch's construction of the intent of the smile proved melancholy to the smiler, who was ordered to be buried alive. Anarkalli was, accordingly, placed, in an upright position, at the appointed spot, and was built around with bricks, while an immense super-structure was raised over the sepulcher, the expense of which was defrayed, as tradition relates, by the sale of one of his bangles. There were formerly extensive gardens, and several buildings connected with the tomb, but not a vestige can now be traced of them. This monument was once occupied by Karak Singh, the eldest and only legitimate son of the Maharaja, but was subsequently been given to an Italian officer, M. Ventura, who has converted it into a haram.

#### **10. Tomb of Sultan Ibrahim at Bijapur, Emma Roberts<sup>45</sup>**

About half a mile to the northward of Bejapore, in the garden of the twelve Imaums, the Durga of Abou at Muzzaffir, as the natives term the majestic tomb of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, rises with a pomp of architecture exceeding even the magnificence of the building in its neighbourhood...

The style of Ibrahim Shah's tomb differs entirely from that of the Burra Gumbooz, (another gorgeous sepulcher,) bearing a stronger resemblance to the generality of the Durgas seen in Hindoostan. It consists of a mosque and mausoleum, raised upon the same platform...The sarcophaguses of the king and his family are placed in a large hall in the center of the building... The dome above is raised on arches...

The simplicity of the central hall, which contains the monumental remains of the king and his family, forms a striking contrast to the splendour of embellishment lavished on the exterior; yet its ornaments are not less effective, or worthy of admiration.... the walls are of such finely-grained black granite, as to have been mistaken for marble. The ceiling is particularly fine, the whole roof being formed of the same kind of stone; and, as it is asserted, without the slightest admixture of timber. This ceiling is so constructed that it does not appear to rest upon the main walls of the building, but on a cornice projected from them, so that the area is reduced from forty to twenty-two feet on each side. The roof is quite flat, and richly ornamented, being divided into square compartments; the traverses of which, though of several pieces, look like solid beams; and it excites wonder that a heavy mass, so disposed, should have



existed so many years without the slightest derangement of its parts...

The mosque which fronts this splendid mausoleum, at the distance of forty yards, having a piece of water and a fountain between, is a plain building, one hundred and fifteen feet by seventy-six, crowned with a dome, and flanked at the angles of each story with slender and lofty minarets. The stones of both these buildings are so neatly put together, that it is scarcely possible to perceive where they are joined; and the whole pile, notwithstanding the absence of the white marble, which adds such brilliant splendour to the mausoleums of Hiindoostan, may vie in magnificence with the most celebrated shrines of Eastern monarchs...

### 11. Imambara at Lucknow, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>46</sup>

In the center of the Husan Abad is a lofty portal, ornamented with many small towers, and at the further extremity of the street is the Imaum Barree (holy place), where the Vizir Asoph ud Dowlah is buried. A noble gateway leads to the fore-court, which is planted with flowers, and opposite to it is one of the grandest structures in India, containing the mortal remains of the architect who erected the bridge. The façade is fronted by a vaulted veranda, 280 feet in length and 30 in breadth, and at the north end of it there is a silver pulpit. This is the resort of devotees: and whenever the priest chants verses from the Koran, a man with a drawn sword stands at his side. Among his audience, the descendants of the Prophet are distinguished by their green dress, and the priests by their black or blue robes. The veranda communicates with a vaulted hall 160 feet in length, 60 in breadth, and 40 in height, in the middle of which stands the silver tomb of the vizir and his wife; but this noble hall is deprived of all dignity or solemnity by the mean and trifling ornaments of lamps, chandeliers, bells, pictures, and birds, with which it is bedizened. At either extremity of this hall are two square rooms sixty-two feet in breadth. Close to this colossal edifice stands a large mosque, built of sandstone; it is ornamented with two high minarets, and three bold vaulted cupolas; and, like the mausoleum, is painted white...

## G. MINARS

### 1. Qutb Minar, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>47</sup>

One of the greatest curiosities of Delhi is the Coottub-Minar, which is fifteen miles from the city, and is a conspicuous object at a great distance. This celebrated pillar was erected in 1193 by Coottubud-Deen, the founder of the Ghoorides, who overthrew the throne of the Brahmins in Delhi, in commemoration of the triumph of Mahometanism over Brahminism...



About eight O'clock I stood before the lofty Coottub Minar: it is built of very fine, hard red sandstone, is 62 feet in diameter at the base, and rises to the height of 265 feet; it is divided into three stories, and the upper gallery is elevated 242 feet 6 inches above the ground. This column, which is the highest in the world, was intended by Coottub-ud-Deen to mark the entrance to a mosque which he purposed building. The lower story is about 90 feet high, and is built in alternate angular and concave channelings, on which sentences from the Koran are inscribed in raised Arabic characters; the other two stories consist of concave flutings only, and diminish gradually to the summit. The whole is crowned by a small dome, which is supported by eight square pillars: this dome was shattered by an earthquake in the year 1803, but has been restored by the English in its original form.

### **Ancient Buddhist and Hindu buildings**

The column stands in the midst of some very ancient Bhoodist and Hindoo buildings and Mahometan ruins. The colossal gates and columns, and the bold vaults of the former, still indicate an age of great prosperity, which intended to immortalize its faith and its history by the grandest works of art. On the cornices are sculptures, representing the processions of their kings, similar to those of the princes of our times. The pilasters are ornamented with elephants' heads; and a careful observer might here trace some isolated moments of the history of an age long since past, and of which so little is known. A longer stay than I was enabled to make is however indispensable to an investigation of this kind, and I was forced to content myself with a cursory view. In one of the courts is an ancient iron pillar thirty feet high, with Sanscrit and Arabic inscriptions, on which the tyrant Nadir Shah, in a passion, struck a violent blow with a hatchet, the mark of which still remains.

## **2. The Feroze Shah Kotla, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>48</sup>**

Late in the afternoon of the same day [14<sup>th</sup> February, 1843] I rode through the city, to the ruins of the palace of the Sultan Feroze, situated a few hundred steps without the south gate. On the plateau of this palace is the celebrated Feroze-Cotelah, or column. It is one of those columns which the pious Fabian speaks of, in his travells 1400 years ago, and of which there is still one in the fort of Allahabad, and three others in North Behar, one in Terai, near to the frontiers of Nepaul, the second not far from Bettiah, and the third on the river Gandaki. They have all the same inscriptions, in the ancient Pali, or Deva Magadhi language, and the Feroze-Cotelah has, also, inscriptions in Persian and Sanscrit. The learned James Princep succeeded in deciphering that in the Pali language. It is an edict of As-o-ko [Ashoka], the Bhoodist king of all India, who lived from 325 to 288 B.C., forbidding the destruction of living



animals, and enforcing the observance of Bhoodism [Buddhism].

The Feroze-Cotelah consists of one piece of brown granite; it is ten feet in circumference, and, gradually tapering towards the summit, rises to the height of 42 feet. It is embedded in the platform of the completely ruined palace. The sun was nearly setting when I arrived before these extensive ruins: I tied my horse to a portion of the standing wall, and clambered over ponderous arches and porticoes up to the plateau. On this spot, standing before a monument more than two thousand years old, which reminded me of three great epochs of the history of India, that of the Bhoodists, of the Brahmins, and of the Moguls, surrounded by ruins, extending further than the eye could reach, with a view of Delhi, whose minarets and domes were gilded by the setting sun, — those times and nations could not fail to rise in a magic picture before my mind.

## H. GARDENS

### 1. Shalimar, William Moorcroft<sup>49</sup>

...I started at three, and at nine reached Shalimar, the large garden laid out by order of Shah Jehan, where I took up my abode in a chamber erected by the Raja close to a well, and a reservoir which it supplies, and from which *jets d'eau* are made to play so near to the apartment as to cool the air at its entrance. Ranjit Singh has, to a considerable extent, put the garden in repair. It is said to contain a hundred bigahs, the whole inclosed by a wall, in the course of which are several buildings. The grounds are intersected by canals, and the walks are formed of bricks laid edgeways. In the middle of the garden is a large square basin for holding water, furnished with copper tubes for fountains, and a white marble slope carved into a surface of leaves and shells, divided into compartments by lines of black marble. There are some open apartments of white marble of one storey on a level with the basin, which present in front of a square marble chamber with recesses on its sides for lamps, before which water may be made to fall in sheets from a ledge surrounding the room at top, whilst streams of water spout up through holes in the floor. This is called Sawanbhadon, as imitative of the alternation of light and darkness with clouds and heavy showers in the season of the rains. The ground is laid out in platforms, and is covered with fruit trees. The water for its supply is brought by an aqueduct from Shahjehanpur, a distance of eight kos. The gateways are lined with enamelled porcelain, and are in very tolerable repair. In the center is a building of about one hundred feet long, consisting of three lines of arched apartments separated by the pillars from which the arches spring; the roof is painted in *fresco* with flowers. Scattered about the garden, sometimes



even in the walks, are fragments of marble sculpture and beautiful mosaic taken from some splendid baths built by the Mohammedan ruler, and suffered by the Sikh prince to fall into decay.

## **2. Floating gardens, William Moorcroft<sup>50</sup>**

Another, and an important use, made of the abundant water surface of Kashmir, is the formation of floating gardens. Various aquatic plants spring from the bottom of the lakes, as water lilies, confervae, sedges, reeds, &c., and as the boats which traverse these water take, generally, the shortest lines they can pursue to the place of their destination, the lakes are, in some parts, cut, as it were, in avenues amongst the plants, which, in shallows, are separated by beds of sedges and of reeds. In the latter places the neighbouring farmer attempts to establish his cucumber and melon floats, by cutting off the roots of the aquatic plants just mentioned, about two feet under the water, so that they completely lose all connexion with the bottom of the lake, but retain their former situation in respect to each other. When thus detached from the soil they are pressed into somewhat closer contact, and formed into beds of about two yards in breadth, and of indefinite length. The heads of the sedges, reeds, and other plants of the float, are now cut off, and laid upon its surface, and covered with a thin coat of mud, which, at first intercepted in its descent, gradually sinks into the mass of matted roots. The bed floats, but is kept in its place by a stake of willow driven through it at each end, which admits of its rising or falling in accommodation to the rise or fall of the water. By means of a long pole thrust amongst the weeds at the bottom of the lake from the side of a boat, and turned round several times in the same direction, a quantity of confervae and of other plants is torn off from the bottom, and carried in the boat to the platform, where the weeds are twisted into conical mounds about two feet in diameter at their base, and of the same height, terminating at the top in a hollow, which is filled with fresh soft mud, drawn from the bottom of the lake, to which sometimes wood ashes are added, though much more frequently omitted. The farmer has in preparation a large number of cucumber and melon plants, which have been raised under mats, and of these, when they have four leaves, he places three plants in the basin of every cone or mound, of which a double row runs along the edge of every bed, at about two feet distance from each other. No further care is necessary, except that of collecting the fruit, and the expense of preparing the platforms and cones is confined to the value of the labour, which altogether is trifling, as the work is very soon done. Perhaps a more economical method of raising cucumbers cannot be devised, and though the narrow beds are ordinarily almost in contact by their sides, yet, by their flexible nature, they are so separable that a small boat may be readily pushed between the lines without injuring their structure,



and, for the most part, they will bear a man's weight, but, generally, the fruit is picked off from the boat. I traversed a tract of about fifty acres of these floating gardens of cucumbers and melons, and saw not above half a dozen unhealthy plants; nor have I seen in the cucumber and melon grounds in the vicinity of very populous cities in Europe, or in Asia, so large an expanse of plant in a state equally healthy, though it must be observed, without running into luxuriance of growth...

The general depth of the floating beds, or mats of weeds and of earth, taken together, was about two feet, and I now observed that some of the beds were about seven feet broad. The general arrangement was line of cucumber cones, bordering each edge, and one of water, or of musk melons, along the middle. The melon plants had become strong, and their cones were now wound round with a fresh addition of confervae and of other weeds, so as to give to each about five feet in diameter...

□







## **Chapter 10**

# **Language, Literature, Science, Education**

- A. Language**
- B. Literature, drama, poetry, music**
- C. Science and medicine**
- D. Education**

## **A. LANGUAGE**

### **SANSKRIT**

#### **1(a) "Astonishing formation," Alexander Dow<sup>1</sup>**

It has been already observed, that the Bedas [Vedas] are written in the Shanscrita [Sanskrit] tongue. Whether the Shanscrita was, in any period of antiquity, the vulgar language of Hindostan, or was invented by the Brahmins, to be a mysterious repository for their religion and philosophy, is difficult to determine. All other languages, it is true, were casually invented by mankind to express their ideas and wants; but the astonishing formation of the Shanscrita seems to be beyond the power of chance. In regularity of etymology and grammatical order, it far exceeds the Arabic. It, in short, bears evident marks, that it has been fixed upon rational principles, by a body of learned men, who studied regularity, harmony, and a wonderful simplicity and energy of expression.

Though the Shanscrita is amazingly copious, a very small grammar and vocabulary serve to illustrate the principles of the whole. In a treatise of a few pages, the roots and primitives are all comprehended, and so uniform are the rules for derivations and inflections, that the etymon of every word is, with facility, at once investigated. The pronunciation is the greatest difficulty that attends the acquirement of the language to perfection. This is so quick and forcible, that a person, even before the years of puberty, must labour a long time before he can pronounce it with propriety; but when once the pronunciation is attained to perfection, it strikes the ear with amazing boldness



and harmony. The alphabet of the Shanscrita consists of fifty letters but one half of these convey combined sounds, so that its characters in fact, do not exceed ours in number.

**(b) "Wonderfully concise," Nathaniel Halhed<sup>2</sup>**

The Shanscrit language is very copious and nervous, but the style of the best authors wonderfully concise. It far exceeds the Greek and Arabick in the regularity of its etymology, and like them has a prodigious number of derivatives from each primary root. The grammatical rules also are numerous and difficult, though there are not many anomalies. As one instance of the truth of this assertion, it may be observed, that there are seven declensions of nouns, all used in the singular, the dual, and the plural number, and all of them differently formed, according as they terminate with a consonant, with a long or a short vowel; and again different also as they are of different genders: not a nominative case can be formed to anyone of these nouns, without the application of at least four rules, which differ likewise with each particular difference of the nouns as above stated: add to this, that every word in the language may be used through all the seven declensions, and there needs no farther proof of the difficulty of the idiom.

The Shanscrit grammars are called Beeakerun [Vyakaran], of which there are many composed by different authors; some too abstruse even for the comprehension of most Bramins, and others too prolix to be ever used but as references. One of the shortest, named the Sarasoottee, contains between two and three hundred pages, and was compiled by Anoobhootee Seroopenam Acharige with a conciseness that can scarcely be paralleled in any other language.

The Shanscrit alphabet contains fifty letters, and it is one boast of the Bramins that it exceeds all other alphabets in this respect: but when we consider that of their thirty-four consonants near half carry combined sounds, and that six of their vowels are merely the correspondent long ones to as many which are short, the advantage seems to be little more than fanciful.

The Shanscrit character, used in Upper Hindostan, is said to be the same original letter that was first delivered to the people of Brihma, and is now called Diewnagur [Devanagari], or the language of angels; whereas the character used of the Bramins of Bengal is by no means so ancient, and though somewhat different is evidently a corruption of the former.

**(c) Chiefly confined to Brahmins, George Forster<sup>3</sup>**

In my research into the principles of the Hindoo religion, I received great aid from a conversant knowledge of the Marhatta language, and an acquaintance, though very trivial, with the Sanscrit. The use of this last tongue, now chiefly confined to a particular sect of Bramins, who officiate in the



character of priests, hath ever been made the channel of conveying to the Hindoos, the essential tenets of their religion, with all the various forms of their worship. The Sanscrit is a sonorous language, abounding in pith and conciseness; and its periods flow with boldness, and terminate in a cadence peculiarly musical.

**(d) "Of perfect structure," Sir William Jones<sup>4</sup>**

The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and the Celtick, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family, if this were the place for discussing any question concerning the antiquities of Persia.

The characters, in which the languages of India were originally written, are called *Nagari*, from *Nagara*, a city, with the word *Deva* sometimes prefixed, because they are believed to have been taught by the Divinity himself, who prescribed the artificial order of them in a voice from heaven. These letters, with no greater variation in their form by the change of straight lines to curves, or conversely, than the Cufick alphabet has received in its way to India, are still adopted in more than twenty kingdoms and states, from the borders of Cashgar and Khoten, to Rama's bridge, and from the Sindhu to the river of Siam; nor can I help believing, although the polished and elegant *Devanagari* may not be so ancient as the monumental characters in the caverns of Jara-sandha [king of Magadh mentioned in the Mahabharat; the reference is probably to inscriptions in the caves of Rajagriha, the ancient capital of Magadh], that the square, Chaldaick letters in which most Hebrew books are copied, were originally the same, or derived from the same prototype, both with the Indian and Arabian characters: that the Phenician, from which the Greek and Roman alphabets were formed by various changes and inversions, had a similar origin, there can be little doubt; and the inscriptions at Canarah, of which you now possess a most accurate copy, seem to be compounded of *Nagan* and Ethiopicke letters, which bear a close relation to each other, both in the mode of writing from the left hand, and in the singular manner of connecting the vowels with the consonants. These remarks may favour an opinion entertained of many, that all the symbols of sound, which at first, probably, were only rude outlines of the different organs of speech, had a common origin; the symbols of ideas, now used in China and Japan, and



formerly, perhaps, in Egypt and Mexico, are quite of a distinct nature; but it is very remarkable, that the order of sounds in the Chinese grammars corresponds nearly with that observed in Tibet, and hardly differs from that, which the Hindus consider as the invention of their Gods.

**(e) Rev. William Carey on his decision to translate the Scriptures into Sanskrit with the help of the pandits at Fort William College<sup>5</sup>**

Sanskrit was the vehicle by which the learned shared their literary information; the depository of their records, and of all the science they possessed. It had, too, a sacred character, as the tongue in which were treasured the stories of their theology, the rites of their religion, the exploits of their gods. To translate the Scriptures thereinto would be to deposit them in the country's archives, and to secure for them a degree of reverence in the Indian people's eyes.

**(f) Sanskrit – an index of great cultural achievement, Maria Graham<sup>6</sup>**

Were all other monuments swept away from the face of Hindostan, were its inhabitants destroyed, and its name forgotten, the existence of the Sanscrit language would prove that it once contained a race who had reached a high degree of refinement, and who must have been blest with many rare advantages before such a language could have been formed and polished. Amidst the wreck of nations where it flourished, and superior to the havoc of war and of conquest, it remains a venerable monument of the splendor of other times, as the solid pyramid in the deserts of Egypt...

**(g) Sacred language, William Macintosh<sup>7</sup>**

The Hindoo language is beautiful, expressive, and nervous. In reading and speaking, the Hindoos are very musical...There is a dead language, understood only by...the priests, called the Sancrit language, in which their sacred volumes are written.

**(h) Sanskrit inseparably linked to Hinduism, Rev. Alexander Duff<sup>8</sup>**

...every term in the sacred tongue is linked inseparably with some idea, or sentiment, or deduction of Hinduism, which is a stupendous system of error; – so that a native in acquiring it becomes indoctrinated into a false system; and, after having mastered it, is apt to become *tenfold more* a child of Pantheism, idolatry, and superstition than before! Whereas, in the very act of acquiring English, the mind, in grasping the import of *new terms*, is perpetually brought in contact with the *new ideas*, the *new truths*, of which these terms are the symbols and representatives; – so that, by the time that the language



has been mastered, the student must be *tenfold less* the child of Pantheism, idolatry, and superstition than before.

## **2. Malabarian**

### **(a) The Malabarian dictionary, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg<sup>9</sup>**

I have begun compiling a dictionary, and that in such a way as to write first of all each word in Malabarian characters to which I immediately add Latin letters to show how it is to be pronounced correctly, and after that its meaning. One might wish that this language were taught and learned in Europe with as much diligence as other Oriental languages, inasmuch as the Malabarians are a great and innumerable people who might thus be helped out of their heathenish blindness by the Grace of God, if all Protestant kings and potentates would assist in this and allocate sufficient funds. It might also be to their own advantage that one would be able to understand from their writings the *arcanum* (profound mystery) of their theology and philosophy in which one may perhaps find as much that is good and reasonable as in the long since deciphered Aristotle or other heathenish scribes. I myself must confess that my 70-year-old schoolmaster often asks me such questions as tell me clearly that in their philosophy things may not be quite so illogical as people at home are wont to imagine in the case of such heathens. They are so intelligent that were they to hear the scholars in Europe discourse from the lectern on logics, rhetoric and metaphysics, they would laugh with derision and regard such art as the greatest folly about the general misery that could ever have been invented in the world. [The dictionary was published in 1716].

### **(b) Father Paulinus, whose travel book contains a wealth of information on India and who gained the confidence of the Maharaja of Travancore, discussed the issue of linguistics<sup>10</sup>**

After the king had addressed a few general questions to us concerning the naval war between the English and the French, he asked of me specifically how long I had been in Malabar and how I had managed to learn the local tongue so well. He had often noticed, the king added, that other Europeans either did not understand it at all or, lacking the proper pronunciation, expressed themselves so indistinctly that one could hardly understand them. To this I replied that I was reading most diligently the Brahmin book of Amarasinha. That caused the king uncommon amusement. What? he said, you even read our writings? That is the true and most noble motive for the king's kindness to me and trust in me throughout my stay in Malabar. He was a great admirer of the writings and religion of his people. Now that he saw that the Europeans were studying them as well, it cleared the path for me to get from him,



subsequently, many a token of favour which stood the Christian religion in very good stead...

Then the king sent to us through a Brahmin, who acted as his *majordomo* and had another subordinate official with him, a set of dishes prepared in the Malabarian way and paid for out of the king's purse. This quite extraordinary favour is granted only to persons to whom the king wishes to give notable proof of his respect. The king had been learning English for several months and spoke it very well. Now that he had noticed that I was as fluent in Malabarian as in English, he sent his chamberlain, Payampalli Curipu, to me towards evening and requested me to explain to him in the Malabarian language the eight *Partes Orationis* of the English grammar because he still did not quite know his way about with them. It was true that he had a teacher of English but the latter was not able to explain to him the proper meaning of technical expressions in Malabarian. I put them to paper at once, setting them down side by side in two columns, in Malabarian and English.

The king found my explanation very illuminating, and henceforth always called me his Guru or tutor. He would have liked to keep me at his court; however, the shrewd Brahmins quickly dissuaded him from that idea. In April 1784, the supervisors of the temple of Shiva in Mattincera would not allow the missionaries to sow the fields they had leased from them with rice. As there was no other plot of land to be had at such short notice, the missionaries lodged a complaint with the Governor of Cochin. However, it appeared that those fields were on the land of the King of Travancore; hence, the Governor of Cochin, Mr. van Angelbeck, was unable to do anything in the matter. Therefore he advised me to travel for a second time to Padmanaburam and to appeal to the king for a repeat rescript, for which purpose he furnished me with several letters of recommendation. On 21<sup>st</sup> April I safely arrived in Padmanaburam. I had brought the Malabarian-English-Portuguese grammar with me which I had compiled in Ciattiyati and which the king had requested of me in order to help his chamberlains learn English and Portuguese via the Malabarian tongue. The king had scarcely heard of my arrival when he immediately sent me Padmanabhenpulla and Payampalli Curipu, two young chamberlains who were to bid me welcome in his name and lead me to an audience. I found the king on the verandah, i.e. in the portico in front of his palace, where he was sitting on a Persian carpet, supporting on elbow on a large, gold-braided velvet cushion. He was inexpressibly delighted when I handed him my grammar. In my presence, he had the two abovementioned chamberlains called, showed them my grammar, advised them to study it industriously and explained to them how important it was that both princes and ministers of state acquaint themselves with those languages because of the continual contact with the Europeans. On that occasion the king presented me with a gold bangle, a gold stylus with which one writes on palm leaves



and a small knife with which these leaves are properly cut. He also gave me a letter to the official in Parur, instructing him to make it public that the king had granted me the honour of naming me his court cavalier. The inner content of those presents is not all that substantial, though, for it amounts to but twelve sequinos; yet in a different sense they are of great value as the king only grants them to persons of merit. In all Malabar no one is allowed to use the aforesaid items unless the king has given him express permission. They are marks of esteem which he bestows in exactly the same way as our European princes do the ribbons of their orders. Those to whom he grants them also enjoy certain privileges and advantages, e.g. officials cannot bring action against them without the king's knowledge, they can travel everywhere along the royal road, they need not wait in the ministers' antechambers, they need not surrender the seat of honour to anyone, and more of the same.

### **(c) Language in Malabar, De Grandpre<sup>11</sup>**

They commonly write on the fan-palm leaf, using for the purpose an iron bodkin, which they move with the right hand, and conduct with the thumb-nail of the left, holding the leaf in the hand without resting it. When they wish to make a book, they cut a number of leaves of the same length, make holes in them at each end, and file them: to the cords two thin boards wider and longer than the leaves, are fastened, and which serve to preserve them. They shut the book, and fasten it by drawing the cords tight: there are books of this kind extremely voluminous.

The Moors and Malabars have different characters. The Moorish language is derived from the Persian, of which it has taken the alphabet. This language is much used in every part of Asia, China excepted. The soldiers and sailors all speak it.

The Malabar language is that of the country; it has its particular characters. The study of it is by no means disagreeable; and it has literary works numerous enough to afford any one, who is desirous of instructing himself, sufficient reading.

### **3. The language of Kashmir, George Forster<sup>12</sup>**

The language of Kashmire evidently springs from the Sanscrit stock, and resembles in sound, that of the Mahrattas, though with more harshness, which has probably induced the inhabitants to compose their songs in the Persic, or adopt those of the Persian poets. Yet, in despite of the unpleasant tone of their speech, there is scarcely a person in the country, from youth to old age, who has not a taste for music.

### **4. Hindustani, Victor Jacquemont<sup>13</sup>**

I spent the rainy season fifteen miles to the north of Calcutta at M.



Pearson's country place, occupied chiefly in studying Hindustani, which I can now speak, understand and write well enough...Hindustani, as you know, is nothing but a rough-and-ready mixture of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. In those parts of India where Sanskrit was formerly the vulgar tongue, it still predominates in the Hindustani now spoken; in those geographically nearer to Arabia and Persia, on the other hand, Hindustani is scarcely more than a much corrupted Persian. I have opted for this sort of corruption, so that my jargon may be intelligible both to the people of India and, in case of need, to those of Persia.

## **B. LITERATURE, DRAMA, POETRY, MUSIC**

### **1. Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg on the literary production of the Tamil intellectual world<sup>14</sup>**

Among these heathens, no art is more common than poetry, because all their books on religion are written in verse, and everything that is sung in their community to this day must be poetic. Hence, the older boys learn poetry in all their schools, and each learns as much of it as he can comprehend. Yet those who have a bent for it, take up poetry afterwards professionally and seek to earn their living by it. For this purpose they have various books in which the foundations of this art are expounded, such as 1. TOLKABIAM in which all precepts of this art are treated in detail; 2. DIWAGARAM and NEGENDU, which are something like dictionaries of poetry, in which copious words can be found; 3. NANNUL, which embodies instruction on how to handle letters, syllables and words and on how to deal with a brief theme by expanding it according to this art; 4. KARIGEI, in which the genders of the verses are explained, etc. However, their poetry is much more difficult than the poetry of other languages; for it consists almost entirely of foreign words and makes up quite a different language of which no Malabari can understand anything unless he has been somewhat trained and made himself familiar with the poetic words in schools. In verse these words deviate from the common construction and are inflected quite differently; this, too, causes much difficulty. In their verses they distinguish 4. PAGUM or kinds, the first is called ASHU and is the easiest kind which can be learned and understood first. The next kind is called MADURAM, and of this kind of verse one can understand only half. The third kind is called CHIDDIRUM, which means such verses as, owing to their learned and unknown words and phrases, are understood by no one, not even properly by the present-day poets. The fourth kind is called WISTARUM and comprises such verses as expand brief themes; these, too, can be understood only little. In addition to these, they have 32 genders according to which they make up all their verses.



- 2. Ariel, a pupil of the French Orientalist, Eugene Burnouf [1801-1852], came to Pondicherry and translated the Tamil classic, *Tirukkural*. He wrote to Burnouf about the work<sup>15</sup>**

The Kurral is the masterpiece or *chef d'oeuvre* of Tamil literature – one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought.

That which above all is wonderful in this book is the fact that its author addresses himself, without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind; the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason; that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractness, virtue and truth; that he presents, as it were, in one group the highest laws of domestic and social life; that he is equally perfect in thought, in language and in poetry, in the austere metaphysical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine Nature, as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart.

- 3. Charles Wilkins in his preface of the *Heetopades of Veeshnoo-Sarma* said many of the fables had made their way to Europe centuries before he rendered them into English in 1787<sup>16</sup>**

The following translation...is a faithful portrait of a beautiful work, which...is the Sanskreet original of those celebrated fables, which after passing through most of the Oriental languages...at length, were introduced to the knowledge of the European world with a title importing them to have been originally written by Pilpay, or Bidpai, an ancient Brahman; two names of which, as far as my enquiries have extended, the Brahmans of the present times are totally ignorant. Sir William Jones says: "...the fables of Veeshnoo-Sarma, whom we ridiculously call Pilpay, are the most beautiful, if not the most ancient collection of Apologues in the world."

- 4. *Mahabharata* on par with Homer, Rev. William Carey in a letter in April 1796<sup>17</sup>**

[The *Mahabharata* was] written in most beautiful language; and much upon a par with Homer, – and was it like his Iliad only considered as a great effort of human genius, I should think it one of the first productions of the world, but alas! it is the ground of Faith of Millions of...men; and as such must be held in the utmost abhorrence. [Sanskrit and its literature was] a golden casket exquisitely wrought, but in reality filled with...pebbles and trash.

- 5. Literature of Kashmir, William Moorcroft<sup>18</sup>**

Literature of any description is almost unknown in Kashmir, and it is not easy to discover any relics of those celebrated Sanscrit compositions which originated in the patronage of the princes of the country whilst it was a Hindu principality. Our attention was especially directed to this subject by a



communication from the Secretary of the Asiatic Society, who was desirous of procuring copies of the *Chronicles of Kashmir*, the *Raja Tarangini*, of a local legend called the *Nila Purana*, and a collection of tales, entitled the *Vrihat Katha*. The most particular inquiry was set on foot for these works, and, after much delay, we heard of two copies of the *Chronicles*, written on birch-bark, and one of the *Vrihat Katha*, on a similar material. They were shown to us, and appeared to be antient. Nothing could induce the owners to part with them, but they had no objection to copies being taken. A copy of the *Raja Tarangini* was accordingly transcribed during our stay, and one of the *Vrihat Katha* was put in hand, under the superintendence of a native friend, who promised to forward it when finished to Calcutta. The *Nila Purana* was less scarce, and a copy was purchased, and sent down. These were the only Sanscrit works of the existence of which we obtained any information.

## DRAMA

### 6. *Shakuntala*, William Robertson<sup>19</sup>

It is only to nations considerably advanced in refinement, that the drama is a favourite entertainment....From this specimen of the Indian drama [*Shakuntala*], every reader of good taste, I should imagine, will be satisfied, that it is only among a people of polished manners and delicate sentiments that a composition so simple and correct could be produced or relished... Dramatic exhibitions seem to have been a favourite amusement of the Hindoos as well as of other civilised nations. "The tragedies, comedies, farces, and musical pieces of the Indian theatre, would fill as many volumes as that of any nation in ancient or modern Europe. They are all in verse where the dialogue is elevated, and in prose where it is familiar; the men of rank and learning are represented speaking pure Sanskreet, and the woman Pracrit, which is little more than the language of the Brahmins, melted down by a delicate articulation to the softness of Italian; while the low persons of the drama speak the vulgar dialects of the several provinces which they are supposed to inhabit."

### 7. Hindus had drama 2,000 years ago, Sir William Jones in his preface to *Shakuntala* [1789]<sup>20</sup>

Dramatick poetry must have been immemorially ancient in the Indian empire...By whomsoever or in whatever age this species of entertainment was invented...it was carried to great perfection in its kind...in the first century before Christ...at a time when the Britons were as unlettered and unpolished as the army of Hanumat (satyrs or mountaineers who participated in a great Hindu battle).

[Jones was particularly struck by the fact that Hindu drama employed verse when the dialogue was heightened or exalted, and prose when it was unceremonious and intimate]



**8. On the forces of nature represented allegorically as Hindu deities, Sir William Jones, in his introduction to *Shakuntala*<sup>21</sup>**

The deities introduced in the Fatal Ring are clearly allegorical personages. Marichi, the first production of Brahma, or the Creative Power, signifies light, that subtle fluid which was created before its reservoir, the sun, as water was created before the sea; Casyapa, the offspring of Marichi, seems to be a personification of infinite space, comprehending innumerable worlds; and his children by Aditi, or his active power (unless Aditi mean the primeval day, and Diti, his other wife, the night) are Indra, or the visible firmament, and the twelve Adityas, or suns, presiding over as many months.

**9. Georg Foster [1754-1794] introduced *Shakuntala* to the German intellectual world. He brought *Shakuntala* with him in 1790 from a stay in England. *Shakuntala* set the classically inclined German literary world aflame. It brought a turn towards nature, anticipating the sentiment of romanticism. While in England, Forster became interested in India. For him, India was the symbol of a world of dignified ingenuousness and lucid simplicity. He never had the opportunity of seeing India for himself. In a letter of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1790 to a printer he wrote<sup>22</sup>**

I have brought with me from England: Sacontala or The Fatal Ring, an Indian drama, translated by Sir W. Jones from the Sanskrit and written by Calidas [Kalidas], a famous Indian poet, 1,900 years ago! The qualities of this play make it worthy of close attention. It embodies subtlety, sentiment and poetic fervour despite its childlike innocence of the as yet unformed art of drama. I have co-translated it with my friend Huber (author of *Das heimliche Gericht*). Will you please print it nicely, at 1 Caroline per forme? It is certainly very attractive, as you will see from the sample text I am now having placed in Schiller's *Thalia*.

**In his foreword to *Sakontala*, Georg Forster stated**

[The fascination of the work did not lie in] its having five or seven acts, but in the fact that the tenderest emotions of which the human heart is capable could have been as well expressed on the Ganges by dark-skinned people as on the Rhine, the Tyber or the Ilissus by our white race.

In a letter (of December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1795) to Wilhelm Humboldt, Forster declared enthusiastically that "in the whole Greek antique" there were "no poetic portrayal of beautiful womanhood and beautiful love" that came anywhere near *Shakuntala*. Even seven years later, he confessed in a letter (of February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1802) to Goethe The other day, the Gita Govinda brought me back again also to Sacontala;



why, I even read it with the idea whether one might not be able to make use of it for the stage. But it seems that the theatre is directly opposed to it, being, as it were, the only one of all the 32 winds which does not allow this ship – in this country – to sail. That is probably due to her main characteristic which is gentleness, also to a lack of movement, because the poet indulged in spinning out the emotions with a measure of commodious slowness because the climate itself invites repose.

#### **10. Goethe in 1791 on *Shakuntala* <sup>23</sup>**

When I mention *Shakuntala*, everything is said.

### **POETRY**

#### **11. A poetic people, Sir William Jones<sup>24</sup>**

The Sanscrit Prosody is easy and beautiful: the learned will find in it almost all the measures of the Greeks; and it is remarkable, that the language of the Brahmans runs very naturally into Sapphicks, Alcaicks, and Iambicks. (An evocation of music is found in their lyrics, in the sense that music calls forth a certain emotional response by means of modes, for) the Hindu poets never fail to change the metre, which is their mode, according to the change of subject or sentiment in the same piece. (One species of their poetry) consists almost wholly of a mystical religious allegory, though it seems on a transient view to contain only the sentiments of a wild and voluptuous libertinism.

#### **12. Joseph Guigniaut, in 1825 on Hindu poetry<sup>25</sup>**

The small portion of it with which we are familiar has surprised and impressed all Europe.

### **MUSIC**

#### **13. Harmonious mingling of music and emotional response, Sir William Jones <sup>26</sup>**

By appropriating a different mode to each of the different seasons, the artists of India connected certain strains with certain ideas... Yet farther: since the lunar year, by which festivals and superstitious duties are constantly regulated, proceeds concurrently with the solar year, to which the seasons are necessarily referred, devotion comes also to the aid of musick and all the powers of nature, which are allegorically worshipped as gods and goddesses on their several holidays, contribute to the influence of song on minds naturally susceptible of religious emotions.



## C. SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

### 1. **The Zodiac known early, Sir Robert Barker [1777]**<sup>27</sup>

Some doubts have arisen with regard to the certainty of the ancient Bramins having a knowledge in astronomy, and whether the Persians might not have introduced it into Hindostan, when conquered by that people; but these doubts I think must vanish, when we know that the present Bramins pronounce, from the records and tables which have been handed down to them by their forefathers, the approach of the eclipses of the Sun and Moon, and regularly as they advance give timely information to the emperor and the princes in whose dominion they reside. There are yet some remains in evidence of their being at one time in possession of this science. The signs of the Zodiac, in some of their Choultrys on the coast of Coromandel, as remarked by John Call, Esq. F.R.S. in this letter to the Astronomer Royal, requires little other confirmation. Mr. Call says, that as he was laying on his back, resting himself in the heat of the day, in a Choultry at Verdapetah in the Madura country, near Cape Commorin, he discovered the signs of the Zodiac on the ceiling of the Choultry: that he found one, equally complete, which was on the ceiling of a temple, in the middle of a tank before the pagoda Teppecolum near Mindurah; and the he had often met with several parts in detached pieces. These buildings and temples were the places of residence and worship of the original Bramins, and bear the mark of great antiquity, having perhaps been built before the Persian conquest. Besides, when we know that the manners and customs of the Gentoo religion are such as to preclude them from admitting the smallest innovation in their institutions; when we also know that their fashion in dress, and the mode of their living, have not received the least variation from the earliest account we have of them; it cannot be supposed they would engrave the symbolical figures of the Persian astronomy in their sacred temples; the signs of the Zodiac must therefore have originated with them, if we credit their tradition of the purity of their religion and customs.

### 2. **William Jones in his article "On the Antiquity of the Indian Zodiack"**<sup>28</sup>

I engage to support an opinion...that the Indian division of the Zodiack was not borrowed from the Greeks or Arabs, but, having been known in this country from time immemorial, and being the same in part with that used by other nations of the old Hindu race, was probably invented by the first progenitors of that race before their dispersion.... Since the solar division of [the zodic] in India is the same in substance with that used in Greece, we may reasonably conclude, that both Greeks and Hindus received it from an older nation...from whom both...had a common descent.



### 3. M. Bailly, who authored *Traite sur l'Astronomie*, on astronomical observations of the Hindus<sup>29</sup>

[Astronomical tables] were sent to Europe by the French missionary Patouillet and by Gentil. Those tables were obtained from the Brahmins in Tirvalore... The motion calculated by the Brahmins during the long space of 4,383 years, varies not a single *minute* from the tables of Cassini and Meyer.

### 4. On the astronomy of the Brahmins, John Playfair [1790]<sup>30</sup>

These tables [of the Brahmins of Tirvalore, a small town on the Coromandel Coast] go far back into antiquity. Their epoch coincides with the famous era of the Calyougham, that is, with the beginning of the year 3102 before Christ. When the Brahmins of Tirvalore would calculate the place of the sun for a given time, they begin by reducing into days the interval between that time, and the commencement of the Calyougham, multiplying the years by 365<sup>d</sup>, 6<sup>h</sup>, 12', 30"; and taking away 2<sup>d</sup>, 3<sup>h</sup>, 32', 30", the astronomical epoch having begun that much later than the civil. They next find, by means of certain divisions, when the current began, or how many days have elapsed since the beginning of it, and then, by the table of the duration of months, they reduce these days into astronomical months, days, etc. which is the same with the signs, degrees and minutes of the sun's longitude from the beginning of the zodiac. The sun's longitude, therefore, is found.

Somewhat in the same manner, but by a rule still more artificial and ingenious, they deduce the place of the moon, at any given time, from her place at the beginning of the Calyougham. This rule is so contrived, as to include at once the motions both of the moon and of her apogee, and depends on this principle, according to the very skilful interpretation of M. Bailly, that, 1,600,894 days after the above mentioned epoch, the moon was in her apogee, and 7<sup>s</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>, 0', 7", distant from the beginning of the zodiac; that after 12,372 days, the moon was again in her apogee, with her longitude increased, 9<sup>s</sup>, 27<sup>o</sup>, 48", 10"; that in 3031 days more, the moon is again in her apogee with 11s, 7<sup>o</sup>, 3', 1" more of longitude; and, lastly, that, after 248 days, she is again in her apogee, with 27<sup>o</sup>, 44', 6", more of longitude. By means of the three former numbers, they find, how far, at any given time, the moon is advanced in this period of 248 days, and by a table, expressing how long the moon takes to pass through each degree of her orbit, during that period, they find how far she is then advanced in the zodiac. This rule is strongly marked with all the peculiar characters of the Indian astronomy. It is remarkable for its accuracy, and still more for its ingenuity and refinement; but is not reduced withal, to its ultimate simplicity.

### 5. "Attained a superior degree of perfection," William Robertson<sup>31</sup>

In all the sciences which contribute towards extending our knowledge



of nature, in mathematics, mechanics and astronomy, arithmetic is of elementary use. In whatever country, then, we find such attention has been paid to the improvement of arithmetic as to render its operations most easy and correct, we may presume that the sciences depending upon it have attained a superior degree of perfection. Such improvement of this science we find in India. While, among the Greeks and Romans, the only method used for the notation of numbers was by the letters of alphabet, which necessarily rendered arithmetical calculation extremely tedious and operose, the Indians had, from time immemorial, employed for the same purpose the ten cyphers, or figures, now universally known, and by means of them performed every operation in arithmetic with the greatest facility and expedition. By the happy invention of giving a different value to each figure according to its change of place, no more than ten figures are needed in calculations the most complex, and of any given extent; and arithmetic is the most perfect of all the sciences. The Arabians, not long after their settlement in Spain, introduced this mode of notation into Europe, and were candid enough to acknowledge that they had derived the knowledge of it from the Indians. Though the advantages of this mode of notation are obvious and great, yet so slowly do mankind adopt new inventions, that the use of it was for some time confined to science; by degrees, however, men of business relinquished the former cumbersome method of computation by letters, and the Indian arithmetic came into general use throughout Europe. It is now so familiar and simple, that the ingenuity of the people to whom we are indebted for the invention, is less observed and less celebrated than it merits.

## **6. Extraordinary progress, William Robertson<sup>32</sup>**

The astronomy of the Indians is a proof still more conspicuous of their extraordinary progress in science. The attention and success with which they studied the motions of the heavenly bodies were so little known to the Greeks and Romans, that it is hardly mentioned by them but in the most cursory manner. But as soon as the Mahomedans established an intercourse with the natives of India, they observed and celebrated the superiority of their astronomical knowledge. Of the Europeans who visited India after the communication with it by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, M. Bernier, an inquisitive and philosophical traveller, was one of the first who learned that the Indians had long applied to the study of astronomy, and had made considerable progress in that science. His information, however, seems to have been very general and imperfect. We are indebted for the first scientific proof of the great proficiency of the Indians in astronomical knowledge, to M. de la Loubere, who, on his return from his embassy to Siam, brought with him an extract from a Siamese manuscript, which contained tables and rules for calculating the places of the sun and moon. The manner in which these tables



were constructed rendered the principles on which they were founded extremely obscure, and it required a commentator as conversant in astronomical calculation as the celebrated Cassini, to explain the meaning of this curious fragment. The epoch of the Siamese tables corresponds to the 21<sup>st</sup> of March A.D. 638. Another set of tables was transmitted from Chrisnabouram, in the Carnatic, the epoch of which answers to the 10<sup>th</sup> of March A.D. 1491. A third set of tables came from Narsapour, and the epoch of them goes no farther back than A.D. 1569. The fourth and most curious set of tables was published by M. le Gentil, to whom they were communicated by a learned Brahmin of Tirvalore, a small town on the Coromandel coast, about twelve miles west of Negapatam. The epoch of these tables is of high antiquity, and coincides with the beginning of the celebrated era of the Calyougham or Collee Jogue [Kali yuga], which commenced, according to the Indian account, three thousand one hundred and two years before the birth of Christ.

These four sets of tables have been examined and compared by M. Bailly, who, with singular felicity of genius, has conjoined an uncommon degree of eloquence with the patient researches of an astronomer, and the profound investigations of a geometrician. His calculations have been verified, and his reasonings have been illustrated and extended by Mr. Playfair, in a very masterly Dissertation, published in the Transcriptions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Instead of attempting to follow them in reasonings and calculations, which from their nature are often abstruse and intricate, I shall satisfy myself with giving such a general view of them as is suited to a popular work. This, I hope, may convey a proper idea of what has been published concerning the astronomy of India, a subject too curious and important to be omitted in any account of the state of science in that country; and, without interposing any judgment of my own, I shall leave each of my readers to form his own opinion.

It may be considered as the general result of all the inquiries, reasonings, and calculations, with respect to Indian astronomy, which have hitherto been made public, "That the motion of the heavenly bodies, and more particularly their situation at the commencement of the different epochs to which the four sets of tables refer, are ascertained with great accuracy; and that many of the elements of their calculations, especially for very remote ages, are verified by an astonishing coincidence with the tables of the modern astronomy of Europe, when improved by the latest and most nice deductions from the theory of gravitation." These conclusions are rendered peculiarly interesting, by the evidence which they afford of an advancement in science unexampled in the history of rude nations. The Indian Brahmins, who annually circulate a kind of almanac, containing astronomical predictions of some of the more remarkable phenomena in the heavens, such as the new and full moons, the eclipses of the sun and moon, are in possession of certain methods of calculations, which, upon examination, are found to involve in them a very



extensive system of astronomical knowledge. M. le Gentil, a French astronomer, had an opportunity, while in India, of observing two eclipses of the moon which had been calculated by a Brahmin, and he found the error in either to be very inconsiderable.

### **Brahmin method of predicting eclipses different from any other**

The accuracy of these results is less surprising than the justness and scientific nature of the principles on which the tables, by which they calculate, are constructed; for the method of predicting eclipses which is followed by Brahmins, is of a kind altogether different from any that has been found in the possession of rude nations in the infancy of astronomy. In Chaldea, and even in Greece, in early ages, the method of calculating eclipses was founded on the observation of a certain period or cycle, after which the eclipses of the sun and moon return nearly in the same order; but there was no attempt to analyze the different circumstances on which the eclipse depends, or to deduce its phenomena from a precise knowledge of the motions of the sun and moon. This last was reserved for a more advanced period, when geometry, as well as arithmetic, were called in to the assistance of astronomy, and, if it was attempted at all, seems not to have been attempted with success before the age of Hipparchus. It is a method of this superior kind, founded on principles and on an analysis of the motions of the sun and moon, which guides the calculations of the Brahmins, and they never employ any of the grosser estimations, which were the pride of the first astronomers in Egypt and Chaldea.

### **Principles which guide Brahmins**

The Brahmins of the present times are guided in the calculations by these principles, though they do not now understand them; they know only the use of the tables which are in their possession, but are unacquainted with the method of their construction. The Brahmin who visited M. le Gentil at Pondicherry, and instructed him in the use of the Indian tables, had no knowledge of the principles of his art, and discovered no curiosity concerning the nature of M. le Gentil's observations, or about the instruments which he employed. He was equally ignorant with respect to the authors of these tables: and whatever is to be learned concerning the time or place of their construction, must be deducted from the tables themselves. One set of these tables (as was formerly observed) profess to be as old as the beginning of the Calyougham, or to go back to the year 3102 before the Christian era...

[The result of the enquiries of M. Bailly] is asserted to be, that the astronomy of India is founded on observations which cannot be of a much later date than the period above mentioned. For the Indian tables represent the state of the heavens at that period with astonishing exactness; and there is between them and the calculations of our modern astronomy such a conformity



with respect to those ages, as could result from nothing, but from the authors of the former having accurately copied from nature, and having delineated truly the face of the heavens, in the age wherein they lived...It is accordingly for those very remote ages (about 5000 years distant from the present) that their astronomy is most accurate, and the nearer we come down to our own times, the conformity of its results with ours diminishes. It seems reasonable to suppose, that the time when its rules are most accurate, is the time when the observations were made on which these rules are founded....

The superior perfect of the Indian tables becomes always more conspicuous as we go farther back into antiquity. This shows, likewise, how difficult it is to construct any astronomical tables which will agree with the state of the heavens for a period so remote from the time when the tables were constructed, as four or five thousand years. It is only from astronomy in its most advanced state, such as it has attained in modern Europe, that such accuracy is to be expected.

When an estimate is endeavoured to be made of the geometrical skill necessary for the construction of the Indian tables and rules, it is found to be very considerable; and, beside the knowledge of elementary geometry, it must have required plain and spherical trigonometry, or something equivalent to them, together with certain methods of approximating to the values of geometrical magnitudes, which seem to rise very far above the elements of any of those sciences. Some of these last mark also very clearly, (although this has not been observed by M. Bailly), that the places to which these tables are adapted must be situated between the Tropics, because they are altogether inapplicable at a greater distance from the Equator.

From this long induction, the conclusion which seems obviously to result is, that the Indian astronomy is founded upon observations which were made at a very early period; and when we consider the exact agreement of the places which they assign to the sun and moon, and other heavenly bodies, at that epoch, with those deduced from the tables of De la Caille and Mayer, it strongly confirms the truth of the position which I have been endeavouring to establish concerning the early and high state of civilization in India.

## **7. Science flourished, George Forster<sup>33</sup>**

My knowledge of astronomy is so confined, that I am almost incapacitated from describing the attainment of the Bramins in that science, long before the era in which it flourished in the eastern world. The zodiac, with its twelve signs, is well known to the Hindoos, and they have bestowed on the seven days of the week, which commences with Sunday, the names of the planets. The solar year of the Hindoos, which is arranged in six seasons, consists of twelve months, containing three hundred and sixty-five days; and once in the term of four years an additional day is annexed for the completion



of the earth's precise revolutions round the sun. Commercial transactions and writings of correspondence are dated amongst the Hindoos according to the lunar, or Lumbut year, which commences about the period of the vernal equinox. The month is calculated from the full moon, and is divided into thirty equal parts. Those comprehending the moon's increase, are termed Bood, and the portion of its wain, Bole, or Bood. On the third year of the Lumbut, an extraordinary month is intercalated, for the in-clusion of the time required, in equalizing the lunar and solar systems. The Joaguals are divided into cycles of twelve and sixty years, each of which is distinguished by its peculiar denomination. The observatory at Benares, though rude in its structure, and containing instruments suitably coarse, proves notwithstanding, that the Hindoos possess the knowledge of ascertaining the motions of the heavenly bodies. Could access be obtained to such records of the Hindoos as are divested of that redundancy of fable with which their priests have so copiously interwoven them, it would not be presumptuous to suppose, that we would discover they had been, in the more early ages of the world, one of the most enlightened nations that inhabited the earth.

#### 8. Science of the Hindus, Thomas Twining<sup>34</sup>

Among the papers collected in my journeyings was an Almanac made by the Hindoo Astronomers of Benaras, where I bought it....It contains tables indicating the rising and setting of the sun, the phase of the moon, and the eclipses that would take place in the course of the year...The astronomical calculations it contains have been ascertained to be perfectly correct. I have seen multitudes of the natives, guided by these almanacs, assembled to observe an eclipse which had been calculated with the greatest precision...

They have records of astronomical observations actually made at the junction of the sun and moon, 3102 years before our era, when the junction *did* take place....Their notions of the obliquity of the ecliptic are said to accord exactly with our own. The proportion of the circumference of a circle to its diameter was known to them before it was known in Europe....

#### 9. Maps by natives, Bishop Heber<sup>35</sup>

About half-way we were overtaken by Mr. Williamson himself, who rode with us to our camp, as did also Captain Ovans, who was encamped near and employed in taking a survey of the country. This gentleman brought with him some specimens of his maps, which are extremely minute, extending to the smallest details usually expressed in the survey of a gentleman's property in England, with a copious field book, and a particular statement of the average number of farms, tanks, hills, orchards, &c. in each townland.

The execution of the maps is very neat, and their drawing said to be wonderfully accurate, though the mapping, measurement, and angles are, as



well as the drawing, by native assistants. All which Captain Ovans seems to do is generally to superintend their operations, to give them instruction in cases of difficulty, to notice any error which he may discover in their calculation, and to cover with ink and finish for the inspection of Government the maps which they delineate in pencil. Their neatness, delicacy, and patience in the use of the different instruments and the pencil, he spoke of as really extraordinary; and he was no less satisfied with their intelligence, acuteness, and readiness in the acquisition of the necessary degree of mathematical science. From these gentlemen I gleaned several interesting facts about the inhabitants of this country.

## MEDICINE

### **10. Nicolas L'Empereur, an employ of the Compagnie des Indes, posted at Balasore, in letters to his friend Gabriel Delavigne, on Indian remedies <sup>36</sup>**

#### **Letter dated 20 January 1699**

[I plan to buy] all the books on medicine that the people here have and find out how they use them. I plan to translate these into French so that we know all the cures, great and small, that are as yet unknown to Europeans. We will thereby be able to constitute a library of medical works for India as well as a pharmacy...Indians usually compose their remedies themselves as and when they need them. There are no druggists because it is not worth their while except in Surat in Gujarat where one finds drugs imported by sea from far and wide.

#### **Letter dated 6 January 1701**

This work will be of considerable size and, once printed, nothing [of Indian medicine] will be left unknown to the European surgeon.

#### **'Note to the Reader' in his *Jardin de Lorixa* [*Flora of Orixia*],**

There are fakirs who travel all their lives and many have a lot of wisdom. However, it is difficult to get them to share any of it, unless you know them intimately and offer them alms. Otherwise,...they inform you coldly that they are not interested in money. But I have been friendly with two of them for twelve or fifteen years and through them I have met other passing fakirs. Whenever I find a simple, they instruct me about its properties and uses.

#### **Letter dated 20 January 1727**

The fakirs who have the best remedies come every winter to bathe in the Ganges. By giving them something and speaking to them in [Hindustani], directly without interpreters, they let you into their secrets. It was a fakir who thus taught me the great remedy for epilepsy.



**11. Father Pierre Martin, who came to India in 1699, describes some of his observations on Indian remedies<sup>37</sup>**

[In 1709, while in Marwar, he noted that Indian doctors did not bleed patients like French doctors did]. They practiced purges and made their patients observe a very strict diet. It must be admitted that Indians recover from many illnesses thanks to an extraordinary abstinence. By drinking only warm water, they live as long as Europeans do.

**12. Have cures for most diseases, Quintin Craufurd<sup>38</sup>**

The study of medicine is followed in Hindostan, by persons who devote themselves entirely to that profession. In their books are to be found the names, and supposed causes of almost all diseases that are known, and receipts for the remedies that are to be applied. They consult the pulse with much attention, and, perhaps aided by the great sensibility of their touch, they discern with exactness the least variation in its motion. In all bilious cases they prescribe copious purging, but are at all times averse to bleeding or vomiting. In feverish complaints, they chiefly trust for a cure to extreme abstinence, and large draughts of *cangi*, or light gruel made of rice...

**13. Operation of inoculation of smallpox as performed in Bengal, Ro. Coult in 1731<sup>39</sup>**

The operation of inoculation called by the natives *tikah* has been known in the kingdom of Bengall as near as I can learn, about 150 years and according to the Bhamanian records was first performed by one Dununtary, a physician of Champanager, a small town by the side of the Ganges about half way to Kasimbazaar whose memory is now beholden in great esteem as being thought the author of this operation, which secret, they say, he had immediately of God in a dream.

Their method of performing this operation is by taking a little of the pus (when the smallpox are come of maturity and are of a good kind) and dipping these in the point of a pretty large sharp needle. Therewith make several punctures in the hollow under the deltoid muscle or sometimes in the forehead, after which they cover the part with a little paste made of boiled rice.

When they want the operation of the inoculated matter to be quick they give the patient a small bolus made of a little of the pus, and boiled rice immediately after the operation which is repeated the two following days at noon.

**14. The treatment of small-pox, Edward Ives<sup>40</sup>**

The custom of inoculating for the Small-pox among the natives, though not common in other parts of the East Indies, is frequent in Bengal; and the manner of performing the operation is in many respects singular, and different



from that now practised in England. They take, as Mr. Thomas and I were informed, some matter from the pock of a person who has the disease in a favourable way, and put it into a phial or gallipot. They then dip the point of a needle in this matter, and with it prick the person intended to be inoculated several times in a circle, on the fleshy part of the arm. If he be a grown person, they prick him in both arms. After the blood is wiped away, they rub some more matter on the part, and order the patient to bathe in cold water three times a day, and to live on the most cooling things he can possibly procure, such as water-melons, cucumbers, rice, water, etc. As soon however as the fever comes on, which happens about the fifth or seventh day, the patient is ordered to leave off bathing and the cool diet, and to live on milk and sugar: the fever generally lasts three days and then goes quite off. On the second day after the pock has appeared, they wash the whole body with cold water, which fills the pustules; and this they do for the three succeeding days, two or three times each day, continuing the same regimen of milk and sugar for diet. When the pock is drying off, they sprinkle the patient with rose-water; or when this cannot be had with the juice of *Suttamullie*, *Suctapot*, *Culmee*, and root of green Turmeric. If the pock be very thick, they give the patient *Joan*-seeds to chew, and frequently tie *Bang*-leaves (which is a kind of hemp) on the parts most affected. It is a common practice among the Portuguese, and some of the Indians on the Malabar coast, when the pock is fairly turned, to lay on wood and cow-dung ashes very thick, which they think imbibe the matter, and make the scab fall off the more easily. They leave it to nature to disengage herself from this compound of ashes and pustulatory discharge. Their hopes of a cure from this method, seem to be founded on the supposed antiputrescent and absorbent quality of the ashes. I refer it to better judges to determine whether this practice be rational or not: however, in general the patients recover from this loathsome disorder.

### 15. Nasotomy at Kangra, G.T. Vigne<sup>41</sup>

Bur Kangra has throughout the East an old and far-famed celebrity for a very different reason – the performance by its inhabitants of the operation of nasotomy, if such a term may be applied where a new feature is given. People come even from Persia, to seek for a new nose at this out-of-the-way place. The Emperor Akber ordered that of some miscreant to be cut off; and the sentence was carried into execution. Some time afterwards he made his appearance with a new nose; and the astonished monarch asked how he had acquired it. He was informed that Budyn, a surgeon of his own, had given the man his new nose; and he rewarded his skill by putting him in possession of a Jaghir at Kangra, and gave him the necessary writing, which is still in the possession of one of his descendants at Kangra, the Sikhs, of course, having taken possession of the Jaghir. Had the deed been produced, and shewn to me,



as I wished, they would perhaps have seized that also.

Two practitioners, of whom I attempted to elicit the secrets of their art, were very unwilling to make any communication. However, I learned that they first give the patient a sufficient quantity of opium, bang, or wine, to render him senseless: they then, so I was informed, tap the skin on the forehead, above the nose, until a sort of blister arises, from which a piece of skin, of the proper shape, is then cut, and immediately applied as a nose, sewed on, and supported by pieces of cotton. The wound is then dressed with an ointment, in which blue vitriol is one ingredient.

The surgeons practice upon the credulity of the Hindus, by telling them that all that is done is by favour of the Devi, or spirit, he himself being altogether featureless; and that the operation would succeed nowhere but at Kot Kangra. On my way to and from the place I saw several persons who had been operated upon, and were returning homeward, looking quite proud of their new acquisition, which was, however, but a sorry substitute for the old feature.

## D. EDUCATION

### 1. **Fra Paolino Da Bartolomeo who was in India from 1776 to 1789**<sup>42</sup>

The education of youth in India is much simpler, and not near so expensive as in Europe. The children assemble half naked under the shade of a coconut tree; place themselves in rows on the ground, and trace out on the sand, with the fore finger of the right hand, the elements of their alphabet, and then smooth it with the left when they wish to trace out other characters. The writing master, called *Agian*, or *Eluttacien*, who stations himself opposite to his pupils, examines what they have done; points out their faults, and shews them how to correct them. At first, he attends them standing; but when the young people have acquired some readiness in writing, he places himself cross-legged on a tyger's or deer's skin, or even on a mat made of the leaves of the coconut-tree, or wild ananas, which is called *Kaida*, plaited together. This method of teaching writing was introduced into India two hundred years before the birth of Christ, according to the testimony of Magasthenes, and still continues to be practiced. No people, perhaps, on earth have adhered so much to their ancient usages and customs as the Indians....

When the Guru, or teacher, enters the school, he is always received with the utmost reverence and respect. His pupils must throw themselves down at full length before him; place their right hand on their mouth, and not venture to speak a single word until he gives them express permission. Those who talk and prate contrary to the prohibition of their master are expelled from the school, as boys who cannot restrain their tongue, and who are consequently unfit for the study of philosophy. By these means the preceptor always receives



that respect which is due to him: the pupils are obedient, and seldom offend against rules which are so carefully inculcated.

## **2. Education not limited to a select group, William Macintosh<sup>43</sup>**

...even the inferior classes are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic: the youth are taught, not within doors, but in the open air; and it is a singular, but not unpleasing spectacle, to behold, in every village, a venerable old man, reclined on a terraced plain, teaching a number of surrounding boys, who regard him with the utmost reverence and attention, like a shepherd feeding his flock. In those simple seminaries...the gentle and tractable sons of the Hindoos are not only prepared for the business, but instructed in the duties of life; a profound veneration for the object or objects of religious worship; a reverence of their parents; respects for their seniors; justice and humanity towards all men, but a particular affection for those of their own Caste.

## **3. A.D. Campbell, Collector of Bellary, in August 1823, on native schools in his district<sup>44</sup>**

When the whole are assembled, the scholars, according to their number and attainments, are divided into several classes, the lower ones of which are partly under the care of monitors, whilst the higher ones are more immediately under the superintendence of the master, who at the same time has his eye upon the whole school. The number of classes is generally four, and a scholar rises from one to the other according to his capacity and progress. The first business of a child on entering school is to obtain a knowledge of the letters, which he learns by writing them with his finger on the ground in sand, and not by pronouncing the alphabet, as among European nations. When he becomes pretty dexterous writing with his finger in sand, he has then the privilege of writing either with iron style on cadjan leaves, or with a reed on paper, and sometimes on the leaf of the *Aristolochia Indica*, or with a kind of pencil on the Hulligi or Kad which answers the purpose of slates. The two latter in these districts are most common...

The economy with which children are taught to write in the native schools, and the system by which the more advanced scholars are caused to teach the less advanced, and at the same time to confirm their own knowledge, is certainly admirable, and well deserved the imitation it has received in England. The chief defects of the native schools are the nature of the books and learning taught, and the want of competent masters.

## **4. T.B. Jervis, from the South Konkan district, on the daily routine of an elementary school<sup>45</sup>**

The teacher or one of the boys more advanced writes out the letters, or other lessons, on a Board covered with sand, or brick dust; he then consigns



the lekhnee or pencil to his pupil who traces the form of the letters, in succession, and repeats after his instructor the various sounds and powers of each combination. Having repeated his lesson twice, or three times, after his instructor, he is left to himself, and proceeds in the same method, till he is perfect master of his task. He then rubs out the teacher's lesson, and writes it himself, and continues to do so, till he has fixed the form as well as the powers of the several characters in his memory.

A month, or even two are usually devoted to the ceremony of tracing the letters, *Shree Guneshayunumuhu*; after this come the letters of the alphabet, and the *barakuree* or twelve combinations of consonants with vowels, and the figures which are learnt as far as 100: certain small portions being written, and their powers learnt from the instructor till all are thoroughly acquired. Then they proceed to Multiplication Table, called *Lekhe*, as far as 10 times 20; after which they write down and commit to memory various tables *Paokee*, *Neemukee*, *Paonekee*, *Suwakee*, *Deerkee*, *Ureechkee*; which are multiples of fractional parts by integers; and lastly tables of money, weights and measures: These rudiments, having been thoroughly acquired, the children are said to have got through the *Doolukshur*, or dust writing, and they proceed to writing on paper, to reading, and arithmetic...

#### 5. William Adam, in his First Report of July 1835, on the state of indigenous education in Bengal<sup>46</sup>

The estimate of 100,000 such schools (indigenous elementary schools) in Bengal and Behar is confirmed by a consideration of the number of villages in those two provinces. Their number has been officially estimated at 150,748, of which, not all, but most have each a school. If it be admitted that there is so large a proportion as a third of the villages that have no schools, there will still be 100,000 that have them. Let it be admitted that these calculations from uncertain premises are only distant approximations to the truth, and it will still appear that the system of village schools is extensively prevalent...

#### 6. Learning by versified enigmas, Reverend Robert Caldwell [1814-1891]<sup>47</sup>

[Learning] versified enigmas and harmonious platitudes [led Indians to develop great capacity for patient labour and] an accurate knowledge of details [but inhibited development of a] zeal for historical truth [and the] power of generalization and discrimination.

#### 7. Francis Ellis, of the Madras Civil Service, on the Indian system of memorization<sup>48</sup>

...the mode of study prevalent among the natives of India (was) the best



means of conveying the law. [All knowledge and science in India] from the lowest to the highest form of logic and theology [were] acquired by committing to memory technical verses. [The memorized verses were like a] tap root [from which the pundit could draw to] explain, illustrate or enforce dicta. [Indian reasoning was based on] the habit of their education [which rested on the memorization] of concentrated not diffuse knowledge, [which was easier to understand in verse form].

### **8. English schools, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>49</sup>**

Among a people entertaining such religious and social principles, it must be difficult for the English to introduce Christianity and European learning: the former makes but comparatively slow progress, through the labours of the missionaries, while the latter daily gains ground, and promotes the Christian spirit and manner. Though it is only within the last twenty years that the British government has begun to provide for the establishment of schools and popular instruction, yet much has been effected within this short period. Deeply impressed with the vast importance of the subject, the government has prosecuted the undertaking on a truly noble scale, and with an energy and zeal commensurate with its end...

### **9. Medical College at Calcutta, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>50</sup>**

On the foundation of the Medical College at Calcutta, Dwarkanath instituted an annual prize of 2000 rupees, for three years, for the best scholar, and expressed himself, in a letter, as follows:- "My own experience has taught me that no motive is more powerful with the natives than pecuniary rewards, and I am convinced that the difficulties will vanish in proportion as young men are encouraged in this manner." This frank and sincere acknowledgment clearly intimates the motive which induces many parents to send their children to school; but, on the other hand, it is not to be denied, that occasionally a thirst for knowledge and a desire of improvement lead the youth to school. Thus, in the Hindoo College at Calcutta, I met with the only son of distinguished and wealthy parents, of Assam, who by his ardour for improvement, and his good moral conduct, was honourably distinguished among his collegiates. Two scholars, in the Hindoo College at Hooghly, had likewise devoted all their energies to the study of astronomy, and, from their own scanty means, had themselves made the requisite instruments for observing the stars; with small magnifying powers, indeed, but answering the purpose.

Boys of all ages, above seven, and of every religion and caste, from the highest Brahmin to the lowest Shoodra, are found in these schools. The scholars themselves make no distinction whatever on this account, though, in order to avoid giving offence, there is a regulation that if the parents or children of the higher caste should insist upon it, a child belonging to the lowest caste must



be removed from the institution; but such a case has never occurred. Only in children of the highest caste of the Brahmins a partial separation is made when they take their meals, which are brought to them by servants of their own caste. These boys then retire to a place appropriated to them, where they sit down apart from their fellow-scholars. In other respects, they live together in a familiar and friendly manner, both in and out of school...

A very striking fact among the boys, especially the children of Hindoos, is their quick comprehension, their intellectual activity, and their love of European learning, especially metaphysics and the *belles lettres*. Of ten children of the higher classes, you will find nine who are fond of poetry, and have made themselves familiar with the best poets of England. With this passion for poetry, however, they find it difficult to make verses, though they are inexhaustible in ideas for poetical subjects. In the other branches of learning, particularly mathematics, history, and geography, I find as much knowledge among the scholars of the first class as among our first class at the Gymnasia...

Though it cannot be doubted that there are boys of remarkable talent among the scholars, it is equally true, that no men of distinguished eminence have arisen among them. They appear like tropical plants, which rapidly arrive at maturity: they attain their physical and intellectual perfection too prematurely to be vigorous and durable: they are tall and slender, but their nerves and muscles are weak, and they have no stamina. It is evident, that among them brilliant schoolboys seldom enter into life as eminent men; and it is to be feared, that the mind of the Bengalese will never acquire any very great depth, or be endowed with much activity. The few exceptions, among whom Rammohun Roy cannot be wholly excluded, are distinguished only as Hindoos, and would never have been considered great men in our own country.









## **Religion and Philosophy**

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- A. Features of Hindu philosophy**
- B. Sacred texts**
- C. Hindu mythology**
- D. On Conversions**

### **A. FEATURES OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY**

#### **1. The French Jesuit, Father Pons, writing in 1740, on the *Vedanta* as expounded by Shankara<sup>1</sup>**

The concepts provided by the disciples of this Being are admirable. In its natural oneness, it is, in a way, triune through its existence, its infinite light, and its supreme joy; everything there is eternal, non-material, infinite. But because the personal experience of the Self is not consistent with this very beautiful idea, they admit of another principle, which is purely negative and which consequently has no real being, the *Maya* of the Self; that is to say, illusion. For example, I believe I am now actually writing to you about the system of *Vedanta*, but I am mistaken. In truth, I am *self*, but you do not exist; I am not writing to you at all. No one has ever conceived of *Vedanta*, nor of a system; I am mistaken, that is all, but my delusion has no existence. That is what they explain through the analogy they always repeat of a rope on the ground which one might think to be a snake.

#### **2. Tenets of Bramah are most ancient, John Zephaniah Holwell<sup>2</sup>**

Without reposing an implicit confidence in the relations the Bramins give of the antiquity of their scriptures; we will with our readers' indulgence, humbly offer a few conjectures that have swayed us into a belief and conclusion, that the original tenets of Bramah are most ancient; that they are truly original, and not copied from any system of theology, that has ever been promulged to, or obtruded upon the belief of mankind...



It has been without reserve asserted, that the Gentoos received their doctrines and worship, from the Persees or Egyptians; but without (as we conceive) any degree of probability, or grounds, for the foundation of this opinion: reason and facts, seeming to us, to be on the side of the very contrary opinion.

That there was a very early communication between the empires of Persia, Egypt and Indostan, is beyond controversy; the former lay contiguous to Indostan; and although Egypt lay more remote from it, there still was an easy passage open between them, by the navigation from the Red-Sea, to the Indus: therefore it will appear no strained conclusion, if we say; it is most likely there had been frequent intercourse between the learned Magi of both those nations, and the Bramins, long before the last mentioned sages were visited by Zoroaster and Pythagoras.

### **Brahmins famed in the earliest known times**

It is necessary to remark that the Bramins did not, indeed could not, seek this intercourse, for the principles of their religion forbade their travelling, or mixing with other nations; but so famed were they in the earliest known times for the purity of their manners, and the sublimity of their wisdom and doctrines, that their converse was sought after, and solicited universally by the philosophers, and searchers after wisdom and truth. For this character of them, we have the concurring testimony of all antiquity.

### **Visited by Zoroaster and Pythagoras**

At what period of time, Indostan was visited by Zoroaster and Pythagoras, is not clearly determined by the learned; we will suppose it, with the generality of writers, to have been about the time of Romulus. That these sages travelled, not to instruct, but, to be instructed; is a fact that may be determined with more precision; as well as, that they were not in Indostan together. As they both made a long residence with the Bramins North West of the Ganges (for the name of *Zardhurst*, and *Pythagore* retain a place in the Gentoo annals 'as travellers in search of wisdom') it is reasonable to conclude they might in some degree be instructed in the Sanscrit character, and consequently, in the doctrines and worship instituted by the *Chatah* and *Aughtorrah Bhades* (Atharva Veda).

It is worthy notice that the metempsychosis as well as the three grand principles taught in the greater Eleusinian mysteries; namely, the unity of the godhead, his general providence over all creation, and a future state of rewards and punishments; were fundamental doctrines of Bramah's *Chatah Bhade Shastah* [*Satapatha Brahmana*], and were preached by the Bramins, from time immemorial to this day, throughout Indostan: not as mysteries, but as religious tenets, publicly known and received; by every Gentoo, of the meanest capacity;



this is a truth, which, we conceive, was unknown to the learned investigator of the Eleusinian mysteries; or it is probable he would, with more caution, have asserted, that the Eastern nations received their doctrines from the Egyptians.

Although the polytheism of the Gentoos had its origin from the first promulgation of the *Chatah Bhade Shastah*, and their mythology from the publication of the *Aughtorrah Bhade*; yet the above mentioned theological dogmas remained inviolable and unchanged: and as these, with the firm persuasion of the prae-existent state of the spirit, or soul, have ever been, and still are, the very basis of all the Gentoo worship; it appears to us most probable, (from the early communication before remarked, and the reasons before given) that the Egyptians borrowed these tenets from the Bramins.

That Pythagoras took the doctrine of the metempsychosis, from the Bramins, is not disputed: yet future times erroneously stiled it Pythagorean; an egregious mistake, which could proceed only from ignorance of its original.

Whatever may have been the period, that Indostan was visited by the two travelling sages abovementioned; it is acknowledged that Pythagoras undertook that journey, some years later than Zoroaster: when Pythagoras left India, he went into Persia, where he conversed with the Magi of that country, and was instructed in their mysteries; and is said (with probability of truth) to have held many conferences with Zoroaster, on the doctrines of the Bramins. They had both been initiated in all the mysteries, and learning, of the Egyptians; and Pythagoras, in his second visit to Egypt, before his return to Greece, probably repaid the debt of wisdom he had received from the Magi, of giving them new, and stronger lights, into the theology, cosmogony and mythology of the Bramins, from their *Chatah*, and *Aughtorrah Bhades*...

### 3. Belief in transmigration of the soul, Father Matteo Ripa<sup>3</sup>

The Idolaters, according to their different sects, have Temples, Priests, Prayers, and Idols. Among the countless errors, in which an infinite number of these benighted Idolaters live, is that of the transmigration of souls: this explains their special affection for all sorts of animals and insects, which they do not kill, nor eat the flesh of, but feed most carefully to the extent of having hospitals for lice and fleas. People even pay a high price to let them with impunity suck their blood for some time. They are convinced, indeed, that after death their souls have to pass into the body of some animals more or less unclean, in proportion to the greater or similar number of sins or good actions they have performed in life. They love and venerate, above all, rams (*montoni*) and cows, because they believe very foolishly that they supported the earth on their horns, and that a cow appeased the wrath of their Idol, Mahadeu, when he wished to destroy the Universe in punishment for the sins of men. Another fable of theirs is that after death they will have to pass a big river, and they



will not be able to pass it unless they cling very strongly to the tail of some ram (*montone*) or cow. Accordingly, on rising from their bed in the morning just as we sign our forehead with holy water, so do they defile it with cowdung, and thus defiled they go about the whole day and transact their affairs. And just as we consider ourselves happy, if a priest of holy life assists us in our last moments, so do they consider it as the happiest omen, and a guarantee that they will be able to cross at once the fabulous stream, if in their agony they can have a cow near them and hold her by the tail. Should the animal void herself while they expire, they take it for the clearest sign of hoped-for bliss, assured that they will migrate into that very cow. On the death of the Idolater, this cow is kept and sumptuously fed, and the relatives of the deceased show her all the regard and give her all the tokens of esteem and affection which they would have given to the defunct himself, when he was alive. These superstitions in regard to these animals, in particular the cow, being so strong, when some of them are converted to our Holy Faith, the first trial the missionary makes of the sincerity of their conversion is to make them eat beef, to them a very hard and arduous trial, both on account of their natural repugnance to such food, and because, if those of their sect come to hear of it, they abominate them as impure, and refuse to eat with them, or drink or converse with them. It was what I experienced with one of that Sect, whom the Lord deigned to convert through me; but I shall speak elsewhere of him and his heathen companion.

#### **4. Belief in transmigration not peculiar to Brahmins, Alexander Dow<sup>4</sup>**

The opinion of this philosopher, that the soul, after death, assumes a body of the purer elements, is not peculiar to the Brahmins. It descended from the Druids of Europe, to the Greeks, and was the same with the [Form] of Homer. His idea of the manner of the transmigration of the human soul into various bodies is peculiar to himself. As he holds it as a maxim that a portion of the GREAT SOUL or God, animates every living thing; he thinks it no ways inconsistent, that the same portion that gave life to man, should afterwards pass into the body of any other animal. This transmigration does not, in his opinion, debase the quality of the soul: for when it extricates itself from the fetters of the flesh, it reassumes its original nature.

#### **5. Theory of transmigration consists of the various gradations of reward and punishment, George Forster<sup>5</sup>**

The Hindoos believe implicitly in predestination, and in the transmigration of the soul. The first, though it may operate in cramping the genius and obstructing its progressive powers, has a happy tendency in assuaging their misfortunes, and administering a comfort in all the wants of life. They say it is the hand of God, which for some inscrutable purpose, directs



and impels the actions of his creatures. The doctrine of Metempsychosis restrains them from the use of animal food, an aliment not necessary in a hot climate, and often attended with pernicious consequences. This restriction may also have contributed to infuse into the minds an abhorrence of sanguinary acts, and inculcate the virtues of humanity and general philanthropy.

...In the transmigration of the soul into different bodies, consists the various gradations of reward and punishment amongst the Hindoos. Conformably to their actions, they are transposed into such bodies, whether of the human or brute species, as their conduct, whilst they occupied their former tenements, may have merited. They do not admit of eternal punishment, shudder at the idea of a belief so dissonant to the opinion which they have formed of the Supreme Being.

Evil dispositions, they say, are chastised by a confinement in the bodies of those animals, whom they most resemble in their nature; and are constrained to occupy them, till their vices are either eradicated, or sufficiently qualified to deserve the possession of superior forms. The good actions of man, the Hindoo law-giver has written, will be rewarded by his admission into those bodies which enjoy the utmost human happiness.... After a certain series of transmigration, rendered acceptable to the Deity by a pursuit of virtue, and when his soul shall be completely purified from the taints of evil, the Hindoo is admitted to a participation of the radiant and never-ceasing glory of his first Cause....

## **6. Polytheism a symbolic worship, Alexander Dow<sup>6</sup>**

What has been already said has, it is hoped, thrown a new light on the opinions of the Hindoos, upon the subject of religion and philosophical inquiry. We find that the Brahmins, contrary to the ideas formed of them in the west, invariably believe in the unity, eternity, omniscience and omnipotence of God: that the polytheism of which they have been accused, is no more than a symbolical worship of the divine attributes, which they divide into three classes. Under the name of BRIMHA, they worship the wisdom and creative power of God; under the appellation of BISHEN, his providential and preserving quality; and under that of SHIBAH, that attribute which tends to reduce matter to its original principles.

This system of worship, say the Brahmins, arises from two opinions. The first is, that as God is immaterial, and consequently invisible, it is impossible to raise a proper idea of him, by any image in the human mind. The second is, that it is necessary to strike the gross ideas of man, with some emblems of God's attributes, otherwise, that all sense of religion will naturally vanish from the mind. They, for this purpose, have made symbolical representations of the three classes of the divine attributes; but they aver, that they do not believe them to be separate intelligences. BRIMH, or the supreme divinity, has a thousand names; but the Hindoos would think it the grossest



impiety to represent him under any form. "The human mind, say they, may form some conception of his attributes separately, but who can grasp the whole, within the circle of finite ideas."

## **7. Brahmin views, William Robertson<sup>7</sup>**

The distinction between matter and spirit appears to have been early known by the philosophers of India, and to the latter they ascribed many powers of which they deemed the former to be incapable; and when we recollect how inadequate our conceptions are of every object that does not fall under the cognizance of the senses, we may affirm (if allowance be made for a peculiar notion of the Hindoos, which shall be afterwards explained) that no description of the human soul is more suited to the dignity of its nature than that given by the author of the Mahabarat. "Some," says he, "regard the soul as a wonder, others hear of it with astonishment, but no one knoweth it. The weapon divideth it not; the fire burneth it not; the water corrupteth it not; the wind drieth it not away; for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible; it is eternal, universal, permanent, immoveable; it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable."...

### **Ethics**

This science [Ethics], which has for its object to ascertain what distinguishes virtue from vice, to investigate what motives should prompt men to act, and to prescribe rules for the conduct of life, as it is of all others the most interesting, seems to have deeply engaged the attention of the Brahmins. Their sentiments with respect to these points were various, and, like the philosophers of Greece, the Brahmins were divided into sects, distinguished by maxims and tenets often diametrically opposite. That sect with whose opinions we are, fortunately, best acquainted, had established a system of morals, founded on principles the most generous and dignified which unassisted reason is capable of discovering. Man, they taught, was formed not for speculation or indolence, but for action. He is born, not for himself alone, but for his fellow men. The happiness of the society of which he is a member, the good of mankind, are his ultimate and highest objects. In choosing what to prefer or to reject, the justness and propriety of his own choice are the only considerations to which he should attend. The events which may follow his actions are not in his own power, and whether they be prosperous or adverse, as long as he is satisfied with the purity of the motives which induced him to act, he can enjoy that approbation of his own mind, which constitutes genuine happiness, independent of the power of fortune or the opinions of other men. "Man (says the author of the Mahabarat) enjoyeth not freedom from action. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by those principles which are inherent in his nature. He who restraineth his active faculties, and sitteth down with his mind attentive to the objects of



his senses, may be called one of an astrayed soul. The man is praised, who having subdued all his passions, performeth with his active faculties all the functions of life, unconcerned about the event. Let the motive be in the deed, and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction. Depend upon application, perform thy duty, abandon all thought of the consequence, and make the event equal, whether it terminate in good or in evil; for such an equality is called Yog [i.e. attention to what is spiritual]. Seek an asylum then in wisdom alone; for the miserable and unhappy are so on account of the event of things. Men who are endued with true wisdom are unmindful of good or evil in this world. Study then to obtain this application of thy understanding, for such application in business is a precious art. Wise men who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions, are freed from the chains of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happiness."

From these and other passages which I might have quoted, we learn that the distinguishing doctrines of the Stoical School were taught in India many ages before the birth of Zeno, and inculcated with a persuasive earnestness nearly resembling that of Epictetus; and it is not without astonishment that we find the tenets of this manly active philosophy, which seem to be formed only for men of the most vigorous spirit, prescribed as the rule of conduct to a race of people eminent (as is generally supposed) for the gentleness of their disposition than for the elevation of their minds.

### **8. Hindu belief in one God, George Forster<sup>8</sup>**

The Hindoos believe in one God, without beginning and without end, on whom they bestow, descriptive of his powers, a variety of epithets. But the most common appellation, and which conveys the sublimest sense of his greatness, is, Sree Mun Narrain. The Hindoos, in their supplication to the Deity, address him as endowed with the three attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, which in the Sanscrit, are expressed by the terms, Neerangin, Neerakar, and Neergoon. Though these terms may not, in literary strictness, comprise the precise meaning of the English text, they convey it virtually, and in the amplest sense. The Hindoos likewise believe that the Supreme Deity possesses a three-fold form, the parts of which are said to be separate....

In the beginning the Hindoos believe that the Deity created three men, to whom he gave the names of Brimha, Vystnow, and Shevah. To the first was committed the power of creating mankind; – into the second, of cherishing them; – and to the third, that of restraining, correcting, and destroying them. Brimha at one breath formed the human kind out of the four elements, amongst which he infused, if I understand the interpretation, and may be allowed the term, a vacuum...



### **Incarnations**

According to the religious tradition of the Hindoos, Sree Mun Narrain, since the creation of the world, has at nine different periods assumed incarnated forms, either for the purpose of eradicating some terrestrial evil, or chastising the sins of mankind. The Hindoos worship a secondary species of deity, which they wildly multiply to the number of thirty-three crores, who, in their different functions, are designed to represent the numberless attributes of the Supreme Deity.

### **9. The Hindu trinity, English geographer, Alexander Dalrymple [1738-1808]<sup>9</sup>**

It may not be amiss to say a few words concerning the Mythology of the Hindoos: It is their Doctrine that Brahma (neuter), the Eternal Essence, for Its efficient purpose, is composed of a Triple-Personification; Brahma, The Creator! Veeshnoo, The Preserver! And Seeva, The Destroyer! or rather. The Changer of Things! For annihilation is no part of their Faith; on the contrary, they believe in a pre-existent state, and think that the effect of procreation, is not actually to produce, but to produce under a new form; and they believe that all forms shall continue changing, until by progressive purification, they are re-absorbed into the Eternal Essence.

### **10. Charge of idolatry incorrect, William Macintosh<sup>10</sup>**

Thus far only the Gentoos are idolaters, that in worshipping the great God of the universe, they place before their bodily eyes, for the information of their minds, such representations as are calculated to recall, in a vivid manner, to their imaginations; those attributes which they believe that Almighty being only to possess.

### **11. The German Romantic, Friedrich Schlegel, on Indian religion<sup>11</sup>**

If one considers the superior conception which is at the basis of the truly universal Indian culture and which, itself divine, knows how to embrace in its universality everything that is divine without distinction, then, what we in Europe call religion or what we used to call such, no longer seems to deserve that name. And one would like to advise everyone who wants to see religion, he should, just as one goes to Italy to study art, go to India for that purpose where he may be certain to find at least fragments for which he will surely look in vain in Europe.



## B. SACRED TEXTS

### 1. Father Pons, in a letter in 1740, on the value of the *Shastras*<sup>12</sup>

Their unique purpose, the aim of all the philosophical pursuits of the Brahmans, is to deliver the soul from the captivity and miseries of this life by means of a perfect bliss, which is essentially either the deliverance of the soul or its immediate effect.

### 2. The *Vedas*, Alexander Dow<sup>13</sup>

It is but justice to the Brahmins to confess that the author of this dissertation is very sensible of his own inability to illustrate, with that fullness and perspicuity which it deserves, that symbolical religion, which they are at so much pain to conceal from foreigners. He however can aver that he has not misrepresented one single circumstance or tenet, though many may have escaped his observation.

The books which contain the religion and philosophy of the Hindoos, are distinguished by the name of Bedas. They are four in number, and like the sacred writings of other nations, are said to have been penned by the divinity. Beda in the Shanscrita, literally signifies Science: for these books not only treat of religious and moral duties, but of every branch of philosophical knowledge.

The Bedas are, by the Brahmins, held so sacred, that they permit no other sect to read them; and such is the influence of superstition and priest craft over the minds of the other Casts in India, that they would deem it an unpardonable sin to satisfy their curiosity in the respect, were it even within the compass of their power. The Brahmins themselves are bound by such strong ties of religion, to confine those writings to their own tribe, that were any of them known to read them to others, he would be immediately ex-communicated. This punishment is worse than even death itself among the Hindoos. The offender is not only thrown down from the noblest order to the most polluted Cast, but his posterity are rendered for ever incapable of being received into his former dignity...

The four Bedas contain 100,000 ashlogues [shlokas] or stanzas in verse, each of which consists of four lines. The first Beda is called RUG BEDA, which signifies the science of divination, concerning which it principally treats. It also contains astrology, astronomy, natural philosophy, and a very particular account of the creation of matter, and the formation of the world.

The second Beda is distinguished by the name of SHEHAM [Sama Veda]. That word signifies piety or devotion, and this book accordingly treats of all religious and moral duties. It also contains many hymns in praise of the Supreme Being, as well as verses in honour of subaltern intelligences.



The third is the JUDGER BEDA [Yajur Veda], which, as the world implies, comprehends the whole science of religious rites and ceremonies; such as fasts, festivals, purifications, penances, pilgrimages, sacrifices, prayers, and offerings. They give the appellation of OBATAR BAH [Atharva] to the fourth Beda. OBATAR signifies in the Shanscrita, the being or the essence, and BAH good; so that the Obatar Bah is literally the knowledge of the good being, and accordingly this book comprehends the whole science of theology and metaphysical philosophy.

The language of the Obatar Bah Beda is now become obsolete; so that very few Brahmins pretend to read it with propriety. Whether this proceeds from its great antiquity, or from its being wrote in an uncommon dialect of the Shanscrita, is hard to determine. We are incline to believe that the first is the truth; for we can by no means agree with a late ingenious writer [Holwell], who affirms that the Obatar Bah was written in a period posterior to the rest of the Bedas.

**3. Anquetil-Duperron took back to France a copy of the *Oupanek'hat* [*Upanishads*], which had been translated into Persian by the Mughal Prince Dara. Anquetil-Duperron translated it into French and Latin between 1786 and 1791. Arthur Schopenhauer was so impressed that he wrote<sup>14</sup>**

In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life – it will be the solace of my death.

**4. Nathaniel Halhed on the antiquity of Hindu texts in "The Translator's Preface," to *A Code of Gentoo Laws*<sup>15</sup>**

...from the premises already established, this conclusion at least may fairly be deduced, that the world does not now contain annals of more indisputable antiquity than those delivered down by the ancient Bramins.

Collateral proofs of this antiquity may be drawn from every page of the present Code of Laws, in its wonderful correspondence with many parts of the Institutes of Moses, one of the first of known legislators; from whom we cannot possibly find grounds to suppose the Hindoos received the smallest article of their religion or jurisprudence, though it is not utterly impossible, that the doctrines of Hindostan might have been early transplanted into Egypt, and thus have become familiar to Moses.

The Gentoos have in all ages believed in the transmigration of souls, which they denominate Kayaprewaesh and Kayapelut: this latter literally answers to the word metempsychosis. An ancient Shaster, called the Geeta, written by Adhae Doom, has a beautiful stanza upon this system of the transmigration, which he compares to a change of dress.



### 5. The *Gita*, Warren Hastings in 1784<sup>16</sup>

...I hesitate not to pronounce the Geeta a performance of great originality; of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled; and a single exception, among all the known religions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines.

### 6. Charles Wilkins in "The Translator's Preface [1784]," from *The Bhagvat-Gita*<sup>17</sup>

The following work, forming part of the *Mahabharat*, an ancient Hindoo poem, is a dialogue supposed to have passed between *Kreeshna*, an incarnation of the Deity, and his pupil and favorite *Arjoon*, one of the five sons of *Pandoo*, who is said to have reigned about five thousand years ago, just before the commencement of a famous battle fought on the plains of *Koorookshetra*, near *Dehly*, at the beginning of the *Kale-Yoog*, or fourth and present age of the world, for the empire of *Bharat-versh*, which, at that time, included all the countries that, in the present division of the globe, are called India, extending from the borders of Persia to the extremity of China; and from the snowy mountains to the southern promontory...

It seems as if the principal design of these dialogues was to unite all the prevailing modes of worship of those days; and, by setting up the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead, in opposition to idolatrous sacrifices, and the worship of images, to undermine the tenets inculcated of the *Veds*; for although the author dared not make a direct attack, either upon the prevailing prejudices of the people, or the divine authority of those ancient books; yet, by offering eternal happiness to such as worship *Brahm*, the Almighty, whilst he declares the reward of such as follow other Gods shall be but a temporary enjoyment of an inferior heaven, for a period measured by the extent of their virtues, his design was to bring about the downfall of polytheism; or, at least, to induce men to believe *God* present in every image before which they bent, and the object of all their ceremonies and sacrifices.

The most learned *Brahmans* of the present times are Unitarians according to the doctrines of *Kreeshna*; but, at the same time that they believe but in one God, an universal spirit, they so far comply with the prejudices of the vulgar, as outwardly to perform all the ceremonies inculcated of the *Veds*, such as sacrifices, ablutions, &c. They do this, probably, more for the support of their own consequence, which could only arise from the great ignorance of the people, than in compliance with the dictates of *Kreeshna*: indeed, this ignorance, and these ceremonies, are as much the bread of the *Brahmans*, as the superstition of the vulgar is the support of the priesthood in many other countries.



## 7. The Vedanta, Alexander Dow<sup>18</sup>

The Hindoos are divided into two great religious sects: the followers of the doctrine of the BEDANG [Vedanta]; and those who adhere to the principles of the NEADIRZIN [Nyaya]. As the first are esteemed the most orthodox, as well as the most ancient, we shall begin to explain their opinions, by extracts literally translated from the original SHASTER, which goes by the name of Bedang.

Bedang, the title of the Shaster, or commentary upon the Bedas, concerning which we are about to treat, is a word compounded of Bada, *science*, and Ang, *body*. The name of this Shaster therefore, may be literally translated, the Body of science. This book has, in Europe, been erroneously called Vedam; and it is an exposition of the doctrine of the Bedas, by that great philosopher and prophet Beass Muni, who, according to the Brahmins, flourished about four thousand years ago. The Bedang is said to have been revised some ages after Beass Muni, by one Sirrider Swami [Sridhar Swami], since which it has been reckoned sacred, and not subject to any further alterations. Almost all the Hindoos of the Decan, and those of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, are of the sect of the Bedang.

## C. HINDU MYTHOLOGY

### 1. Sir William Jones on the Gods of Greece and India<sup>19</sup>

In drawing a parallel between the Gods of the Indian and European heathens, from whatever source they were derived, I shall remember, that nothing is less favourable to inquiries after truth than a systematical spirit, and shall call to mind the saying of a Hindu writer, 'that whoever obstinately adheres to any set of opinions, may bring himself to believe that the freshest sandalwood is a flame of fire': this will effectually prevent me from insisting, that such a God of India was the Jupiter of Greece; such, the Apollo; such the Mercury: in fact, since all the causes of polytheism contributed largely to the assemblage of Grecian divinities, (though Bacon reduces them all to refined allegories, and Newton to a poetical disguise of true history), we find many Joves, many Apollos, many Mercuries, with distinct attributes and capacities; nor shall I presume to suggest more, than that, in one capacity or another, there exists a striking similitude between the chief objects of worship in ancient Greece or Italy and in the very interesting country, which we now inhabit.

### 2. A striking similarity with Greek mythology, Maria Graham<sup>20</sup>

In making this slight sketch of the Hindoo mythology, I have forborne to point out the striking similarity of many of the deities to those of Greece



and Rome, as it is too obvious to escape your attention. A remarkable proof of their identity with the gods of Egypt occurred in 1801, when the sepoy regiments who had been sent into that country, fell down before the gods in the temple of Tentyra, and claimed them as those of their own belief. The coarseness and inelegance of the Hindoo polytheism, will certainly disgust many accustomed to the graceful mythology of ancient Europe; but it is not incurious, nor perhaps useless, to examine the various systems of religion which the feelings natural to the mind of man have produced – to observe how they have been modified by climate or other circumstances – and to trace, ‘under all their various disguises, the workings of the same common nature; and in the superstitions of *India*, no less than in the lofty visions of Plato, to recognize the existence of those moral ties which unite the heart of man to the Author of his being.’ For my own part, living among the people, and daily beholding the prostrate worshipper, the temple, the altar, and the offering, I take an interest in them which makes up for their want of poetical beauty. Nor can I look with indifference upon a system, however barbarous and superstitious, which has so strong a hold of the minds of its votaries, and which can bring them to despise death and torture in their most dreadful form.

### 3. Parts of their mythology should spread, Maria Graham<sup>21</sup>

I am not fond of the Hindu mythology, but I do not on the whole think worse of it than of that of the West, excepting indeed that its fictions have employed less elegant pens....

But the graceful Crishna with his attendant nymphs moving in mystic unison with the Seasons, and the youthful Camdeo, tipping his arrows with the budding floweret, are images scarcely inferior in beauty...

...there are parts of their mythology over which the veil of mystery is, and ought to be spread.

### 4. Similarities between Hindu mythology and the Bible, Anne Katherine Elwood<sup>22</sup>

In spite of Southey’s [Robert Southey, Romantic poet and exponent of the Orientalist revival in English literature] declaration of the anti-picturesque and unpoetical nature of the mythological personages of the Bramins, I must be presumptuous enough to say, that there appear to me to be more boldly sublime, and magnificently grand ideas frequently to be met with in their sacred writings, than are to be found in any other place but the Bible; indeed so many of the events of our other Scriptures seem darkly shadowed out, and symbolically couched under mystic forms, that it were next to impossible not to believe the Hindoos derived many of their ideas from thence, and, as a large colony of Jews has been from time immemorial settled at Cochin on the



Malabar Coast, the Brahmins may possibly have received some of their leading doctrines from them....Others who give yet more ancient source to the Braminical doctrines, affirm their great legislator, Menu, to have been no other than Noah himself, and they mention several very curious coincidences in support of their hypothesis, whilst some identify Abraham or Abram, with Brahma, and certainly there is a curious similarity in their names; Seraswati is considered to be his consort Sarah....

There are several other curious coincidences between the extravagant fables of the Hindoos and the events recorded in the Bible, from which they appear to have been stolen, and corrupted from the original simplicity by the superstitious additions of the Brahmis. Sir William Jones observes that the three first avatars of Vishnu apparently relate to some stupendous convulsion of our globe from the fountains of the deep, and in the Bhagavat it is related, that when all the world was destroyed in a vast deluge, a pious king, called Styavrata, the seventh Menu, was, whilst performing his devotions, forewarned by Vishnu of the approaching calamity, and by his directions he fabricated a vessel, in which, with his family, consisting of seven persons, he floated upon the waters! His son's names were Charma, Shama and Jyapeti, whose descendants inhabit the globe at this present time, and this Patriarch, Menu, the progenitor of the human race, and who first planted the vine, is represented as taking into the ark 'medical herbs and innumerable seeds,' for the express purpose of renewing decayed vegetation after the flood.

The origin of the sacred groves is traced to Abraham, 'who planted a *grove* in Beershebah, and there called upon the name of the Lord'; and the worship of stones, which may be seen all over India, and to which veneration is paid at this day, seems to have originated in the imitation of Jacob, who, after his famous vision, 'took the stone which he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it', and called the name of the place Bethel, or the House of God; but still more singular than any that I have mentioned is, that at the birth of Chrishna [Krishna], who is no older than the Saviour Vishnu in his eighth avatar, the tyrant Cansa, sovereign of Mathura, in consequence of a prediction which was subsequently verified, that the infant would dethrone and destroy him, ordered all the male children born at that period to be destroyed. Chrishna, however, escaped by being concealed and brought up among herdsmen.

## D. ON CONVERSIONS

### 1. **Hindus admit no converts, John Zephaniah Holwell**<sup>23</sup>

By the fundamental doctrines and laws of the Gentoos, they cannot admit of proselytes or converts, to their faith or worship; nor receive them into the



pale of their communion, without the loss of their cast, or tribe; a disgrace, which every Gentoo would rather suffer death than incur: and although this religious prohibition, in its consequences, reduced the people to a slavish dependence on their Bramins; yet it proved the cement of their union as a nation; which to this day remains unmixed with any other race of people. These are circumstances which, to the best of our knowledge, remembrance, and reading; peculiarly distinguish the Gentoos, from all the nations of the known world, and plead strongly in favor of the great antiquity of this people, as well as the originality of their scriptures.

**2. Hindus allow everyone to go to heaven in his way, Alexander Dow<sup>24</sup>**

Contrary to the practice of all other religious sects, they admit of no converts; but they allow that every one may go to heaven his own way, though they perhaps suppose, that theirs is the most expeditious method to obtain that important end. They chuse rather to make a mystery of their religion, than impose it upon the world, like the Mahommedans, with the sword, or by means of the stake, after the manner of some pious Christians.

**3. Difficult to convert Hindus, Serampore missionaries writing to the Baptist Society in October 1800<sup>25</sup>**

Here the multitude believe that the Ganges can wash from iniquity: what need then of the blood of Christ? Here Brahmuns unblushingly declare that God is the author of sin, and that the world is merely his show: so that sin is no longer feared. Here it is commonly believed that this is not a state of probation, but of rewards and punishments: the doctrine of a future general judgment, therefore, appears wholly false. Here the multitude believe that hell is a place of temporary punishment merely: so that no one much fears, though he may think he is going there. Add to this, all pay a thousand-fold more reverence and devotion to the Brahmuns, than ever the people did to the priesthood in the darkest periods of popery; and all are bound in their present state by the chain of the caste, in breaking which a man must bear to be utterly renounced and abhorred, by his children, his friends, and his countrymen...

**4. Thoughts on conversion of Hindus, Lord Valentia writing from Calcutta in 1803<sup>26</sup>**

Although the Hindoos have adopted from us, various improvements in their manufactures of salt-petre, opium, and indigo, and have made rapid advances in the knowledge of ship-building, practical mathematics, and navigation; yet none of these acquirements have interfered with their religious prejudices. The instant these are touched, they fly off from all approximation to their masters, and an end is put to farther advancement. Nothing is therefore more to be avoided than alarming their jealousy on this head, and exciting the



suspicion that Government means, in any manner, to interfere in the business of proselyting. The Brahmins are a very powerful body; they are both an hereditary nobility, and a reigning hierarchy, looked up to with the highest veneration by the inferior casts, and possessed of the most distinguishing privileges: they will consequently oppose with their whole influence any attempt to subvert that system, upon which all their superiority depends. They have already taken alarm at the proceedings of the Missionaries in Bengal, and other parts; and, if driven to extremities, will doubtless excite a formidable disaffection to our Government among the natives. On the contrary, the former wise policy of treating them with respect, and giving a full toleration to their superstitions, was often attended with the happy effect of making them the instrument of enforcing useful regulations in the country; for they have never scrupled, when required, giving a sanction to the orders of Government to suppress hurtful practices, as in the case of sacrifice of children at Sorgur, and in many other instances. We should also be aware that although the comparison between the Mussulmaun intolerance, and our contrary spirit, was so much in our favour, as to have had a powerful efficacy in attaching them to the British Government, knowing that they had only a choice of masters; yet were this difference of policy taken away, their habits and manners, which are more congenial to those of the Mussulmauns, would probably induce them to prefer their government to ours.

That the success of the Missionaries in China, Japan, and other places should have been brought forward by people unacquainted with India, as an argument of the probable conversion of the Hindoos, is not surprising; but that it should have been urged by "a late resident in Bengal," does indeed astonish me; for what analogy is there between these countries and India? There was no loss of cast, no civil disqualifications, no dread of future punishment, to prevent the Chinese, the Japanese, or the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands from becoming Christians; yet all these impediments are in the way of the Hindoo; and I confess I believe them unconquerable.

The conversions made by the Mahommedan sovereigns of India have also been quoted; but as these are admitted to have been merely the effect of the utmost violence and oppression, they can hardly be used as an argument of the practicability of conversion by any other means; and I trust they are not brought forward as an indirect recommendation of the coercive system of the Rev. Dr. Buchanan....

The advocates for conversion seem to dread the force of the argument that may be brought against them from the former failure of the Mussulmauns to convert their Hindoo subjects, and the more recent failure of the Catholic and other missionaries; they therefore wish to argue, that, "something inefficient or unsuitable has entered into all their measures;" but is it not more reasonable to suppose that there are insurmountable obstacles in the habits,



laws, and religious prejudices of the inhabitants, that have prevented the pure doctrines of Christianity from having the same force over the minds of the Indians that they acquired over the Japanese, Chinese, and other nations? Has not the Massulmaun religion met with the same resistance from its first appearance, through the plentitude of its power, to its present decay? The Sultauns found they could destroy their subjects, they could raze their temples, but they not convert them; not from any antipathy to the religion of their masters, but from an attachment to their own. Yet we should remember, that the Sultauns had advantages that we have not; they had a real, a physical power in the country, which rendered them superior to any risk of rebellion.

Very little encouragement is affordable therefore by past experience to expect that the future exertions of Missionaries should prove successful in converting the Hindoos from a religion to which they are so bigotedly attached, and which is interwoven with their whole civil polity; while the danger of such attempts, if apparently favoured by the British Government, is manifest and urgent...

Upon the whole, I am fully persuaded that the first step to be taken is that of rendering our own religion respectable in the eyes of our Indian subjects by an establishment of greater splendour and dignity, and especially by a better choice and more vigilant inspection of the regular clergy; and that Government should studiously avoid interesting itself in the conversion of the natives, since it is impossible that they should not connect in their minds the zeal of proselyting, exerted by those in power, with a plan of coercion and intolerance. If placing in the hands of the Hindoos translations of Scriptures into the languages of the country, will not induce them to make unfavourable comparisons between our lives and our doctrines, and consequently expose us to contempt, no objection can be made to such a dissemination of the principles of true religion. To its silent operation the cause of Christianity should be left, and who will not rejoice in its success?

#### **5. No possibility of conversion of Hindus to Christianity, letters by Abbe Dubois in 1815 and 1816<sup>27</sup>**

...it is my decided opinion, first, that under existing circumstances there is no human possibility of converting the Hindoos to any sect of Christianity, and, secondly, that the translation of the Holy Scriptures circulated among them, so far from conducing to this end, will, on the contrary, increase the prejudices of the natives against the Christian religion, and prove in many respects detrimental to it...

#### **Frequent apostasy among converts to Christianity**

The low state to which it is now reduced, and the contempt in which it is held, cannot be surpassed. There is not at present in the country (as mentioned



before) more than a third of the Christians who were to be found in it eighty years ago, and this number diminishes every day by frequent apostasy. It will dwindle to nothing in a short period; and if things continue as they are now going on, within less than fifty years there will, I fear, remain no vestige of Christianity among the natives.

The Christian religion, which was formerly an object of indifference, or at most of contempt, is at present become, I will venture to say, almost an object of horror. It is certain that during the last sixty years no proselytes or but a very few have been made. Those Christians who are still to be met with in several parts of the country, and whose number (as I have just mentioned), diminishes every day, are the offspring of the converts made by the Jesuits before that period. The very small number of proselytes who are still gained over from time to time are found among the lowest tribes; so are individuals who, driven out from their castes, on account of their vices or scandalous transgressions of their usages, are shunned afterwards by every body as outlawed men, and have no other resource left than that of turning Christians, in order to form new connexions in society; and you will easily fancy that such an assemblage of the offals and dregs of society only tends to increase the contempt and aversion entertained by the Hindoo against Christianity...

The Hindoos are a people entirely different from all others. You may, if you choose, exercise over them the most despotic sway; you may oppress them by every kind of tyranny; you may overload them with taxes, and rob them of their property; you may carry away their wives and children, load them with chains and send them into exile: – to all such excesses they will perhaps submit; but if you speak of changing any of their principal institutions, either religious or civil, you will find a quite ungovernable people, never to be overcome on this point; and it is my decided opinion, that the day when government shall presume to interfere in such matters, will be the last of its political existence....

### **Few embrace Christianity from conviction**

If any one among the pagans still shews a desire to turn Christian, it is ordinarily among out-casts, or quite helpless persons, left without resources or connections in society, that they are to be found. They, generally speaking, ask for baptism from interested motives. Few, if any of these new converts, would be found, who might be said to have embraced Christianity from conviction; and I have every reason to apprehend, that as long as the usages and customs of the Hindoos continue unimpaired, it is perfect nonsense to think of making among them true and sincere proselytes...

### **“insuperable obstacles” for Christianity**

The experience I have gained through a familiar intercourse with the



natives of all castes, for a period of twenty-five years entirely passed in their society, during which I lived like themselves, conforming to their customs and prejudices, in order to gain their confidence, and endeavouring by these means to insinuate myself among them as a religious teacher, has made me thoroughly acquainted with the insuperable obstacles that Christianity will ever have to encounter in the deep-rooted and quite invincible prejudices, and in the invariable usages, customs, and education of the Hindoos of all castes; and it is my decided opinion, that not only the interests of the Christian religion will never be improved among them, but also that it will by little and little lose the small ground it had gained in better times; and, in a short, dwindle away to nothing...

### **Caste main hurdle to conversion**

...in no country in the world has the Christian religion had to encounter the stupendous obstacles that are to be met with in India. In no country was the struggle so desperate; in none had it to deal with a people so completely priest ridden; in none had it to oppose a system of cunning and priestcraft so deep laid, and so well calculated to baffle all the attempts of that divine religion to gain a solid footing; but, above all, in no country had it to encounter any difficulty resembling that baneful division of the people into castes which (whatever may be its advantages in other respects) has always proved, and will ever prove, an insurmountable bar to its progress. In consequence of this fatal division, nowhere but in India is a father reduced to the cruel and unnatural necessity of separating himself forever from a beloved son who happens to embrace this religion; or a son to renounce forever a tender father for the same reason. Nowhere is a spouse enjoined to divorce, for the same cause, a cherished husband; or an unmarried young person, after having embraced Christianity, doomed to pass the rest of his life in a forced state of celibacy. In no other country is a person who becomes a Christian exposed, by doing so, to the loss of kindred, friends, goods, professionals, and all that he holds dear. In no country, in short, is a man, by becoming a covert to Christianity, cast out as a vagrant from society, proscribed and shunned by all: and yet all this happens in India, and a Hindoo who turns Christian must submit himself to all these, and many other no less severe trials...

### **Role of Brahmins**

The crafty Brahmins, (in order that the system of imposture that establishes their unmolested superiority over the other tribes, and brings the latter under their uncontrolled bondage, might in no way be discovered or questioned,) had the foresight to draw up between the Hindoos and the other nations on earth an impassable, an impregnable line, that defies all attacks from foreigners. There is no opening to approach them, and they themselves



are strictly, and under the severest penalties, precluded from access to any body for the purpose of improving themselves, and bettering their actual condition, than which, as they are firmly and universally persuaded, nothing on the earth is more perfect.

On the other hand, it will be acknowledged, I believe, by every unbiased observer, that as long as we are unable to make impression on the polished part of the nation, on the leaders of public opinion, on the body of Brahmins in short, there remain but very faint hopes of propagating Christianity among the Hindoos; and as long as the only result of our labours shall be, as is at present the case, to bring in to our respective communions here and there a few desperate vagrants, outcasts, pariahs, horse-keepers, beggars, and other persons of the lowest description, the impression made on the public mind cannot fail to be un-favourable and detrimental to the interests of Christianity among a people who, in all circumstances, are ruled by the force of custom and example, and are in no case allowed to judge for themselves.

## **6. All attempts at conversion of Hindus have failed, Victor Jacquemont<sup>28</sup>**

All direct attempts at religious conversion made by the English, especially in Bengal, have completely failed. The Indians, though sounded everywhere, have nowhere been willing to exchange Mohammed or Brahma for Jesus Christ or the Trinity, but for some years past the Government has wisely withdrawn its support from the missionaries (and courageously too, for it takes some courage for the East India Company to provoke the stupid or hypocritical wrath of Parliament) and opened free schools in Calcutta, Benares and Delhi, to which it attracts children of the middle class by every means of influence in its power, for the purpose of instructing them in the languages and sciences of Europe without ever telling them about our follies.

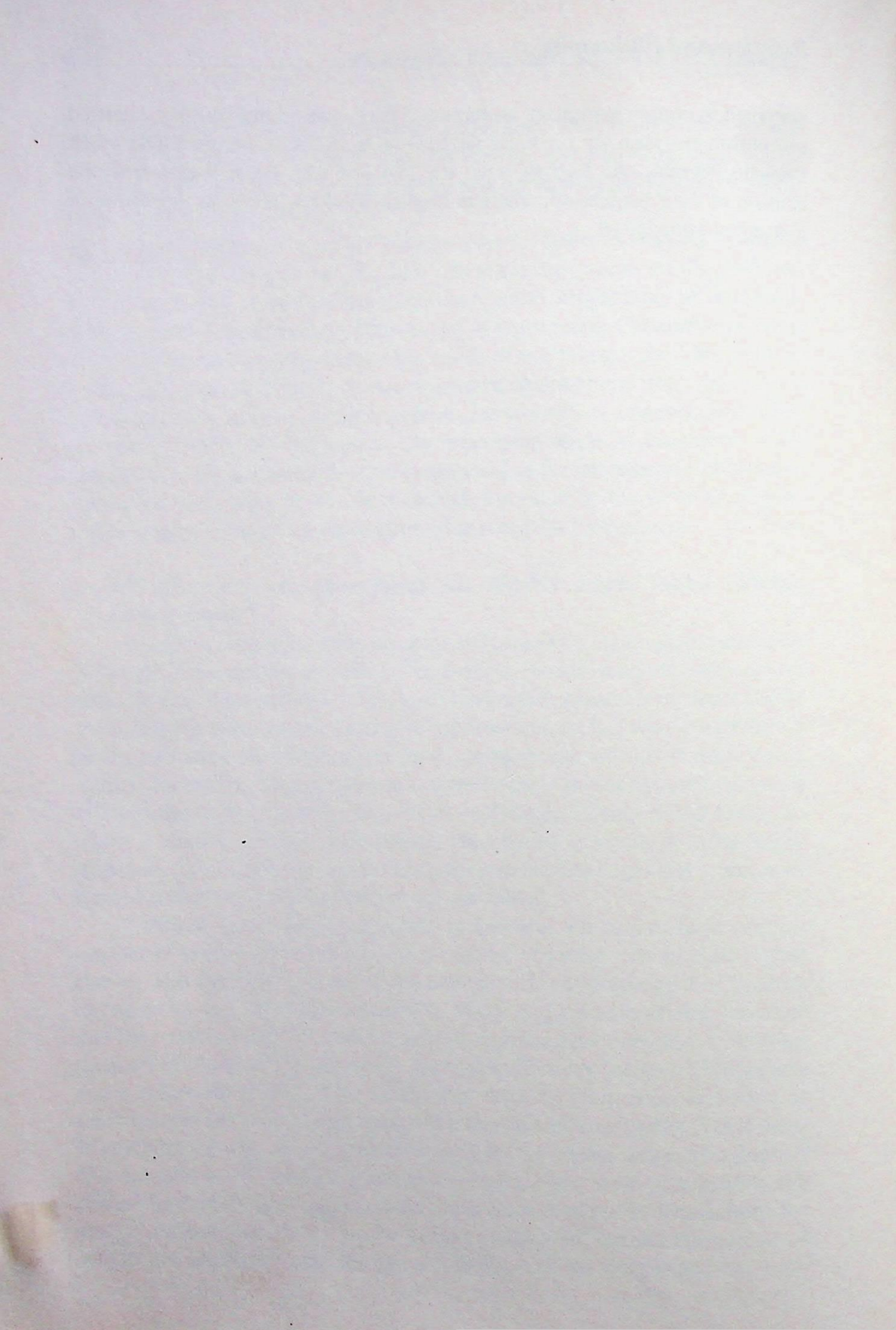
I visited these schools, especially in Calcutta, where they have a larger number of pupils, and I talked with a number of young men in their higher classes who had quite naturally been converted from Mohammed or Brahma to reason by their European education. Many of them complained, however that the possession of this treasure only made them more wretched, by cutting them off from the rest of their nation and giving them a conception of happiness and a desire for it under forms forbidden them by their caste; and none of them has yet had the courage openly to cross this infernal barrier. Yet if there is any hope of ever civilizing the East, it is by this means alone. The English Government would hasten its action enormously if it were to substitute the use of the English language in courts of justice and all public transactions for that of Persian, introduced by the Mogul conquerors, but the knowledge of which has remained quite foreign to the mass of the people and has only



survived in certain hereditary professions. This change could easily be carried out within less than ten years, for the Indians learn English more quickly than they do Persian, and Persian is no use to those who know it except in the routine of their profession, whereas English would be a key to the whole of European knowledge.









## **Religion in Practice**

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- A. The Hindu deities**
- B. Image worship**
- C. Some sacred cities**
- D. Rivers sacred**
- E. Religious leaders**
- F. Hindus in Sindh**
- G. Thoughts on religion in India**

### **A. THE HINDU DEITIES**

#### **1. Numerous deities sign of a compendious theological creed, William Robertson<sup>1</sup>**

Without descending farther into detail, or attempting to enumerate that infinite multitude of deities to which the fancy or the fears of men have allotted the direction of the several departments in nature, we may recognize a striking uniformity of features in the systems of superstition established throughout every part of the earth. The less men have advanced beyond the state of savage life, and the more slender their acquaintance with the operations of nature, the fewer were their deities in number, and the more compendious was their theological creed; but as their mind gradually opened, and their knowledge continued to extend, the objects of their veneration multiplied, and the articles of their faith became more numerous. This took place remarkably among the Greeks in Europe, and the Indians in Asia, the two people in those great divisions of the earth who were most early civilised, and to whom, for that reason, I shall confine all my observations. They believed, that over every movement in the natural world, and over every function in civil or domestic life, even the most common and trivial, a particular deity presided. The manner in which they arranged the stations of these superintending powers, and the



offices which they allotted to each, were in many respects the same. What is supposed to be performed by the power of Jupiter, of Neptune, of Aeolus, of Mars, of Venus, according to the mythology of the West, is ascribed in the East to the agency of Agnee, the god of fire; Varoon, the god of oceans; Vayoo, the god of wind; Cama, the god of love; and a variety of other divinities.

### **Followed faith despite persecution**

...though the faith of Hindoos has been often tried by severe persecutions, excited by the bigotry of their Mahomedan conquerors, no people ever adhered with greater fidelity to the tenets and rites of their ancestors.

## **2. Shiv and Vishnu, George Forster<sup>2</sup>**

The Hindoos composing these casts and classes, are ultimately branched in two divisions; the one denominated Vystnow Bukht [Vishnu Bakht]; the other, Sheva Bukht [Shiv Bhakt]. The followers of the former deity are usually distinguished by a longitudinal mark on the forehead, whilst those of the latter draw a parallel line on that part. Vystnow is worshipped under the representation of a human figure, having a circle of heads, and four hands; emblems of an all-seeing and all-provident Being. The figure of a fabulous bird, on which he is supposed to ride, and denoting the velocity of his motion, is occasionally placed in front of this image. Sheva, or Eishwer, and, as he is often denominated by the Hindoos, the Mhah Deve, is usually represented by a compound figure, describing the male and female parts of generation, and designed as the symbol of pro-creation and fecundity: these faculties, or qualities, being classed amongst the choicest blessings of the Hindoos, and the deprivation of them deemed a severe reproach and misfortune. Facing this designation of Mhah Deve, is sometimes seen, in a suppliant posture, the statue of a cow; or bull; an animal said to have derived his sacred qualities, from having been chosen by this god, as the favourite medium of his conveyance. But the more enlightened pundits say that this creature hath been preserved from slaughter, by its great utility to man; it being his ablest assistant in the labours of the field, and the chief provider of his immediate sustenance...

Another figure represents Sheva, with four hands, holding different emblems of his power; and five heads, four of which are directed to the cardinal point, and the fifth is placed with the face upwards, in the supposed act of contemplating the godhead. This deity, who occupies numerous forms, is figured also with three eyes, one of which is placed in the forehead.

In gratitude for the service which Brimha has performed on earth, it would reasonably be supposed, that the thanksgiving of his people would in some degree be proportioned to his works. But the Hindoos have not dedicated one temple to his honour; nor have they established a single festival, in



remembrance of his deeds. It would redound but little to my credit, did I insert in this place the reasons alleged in their religious tracts, for the neglect of Brimha. It is a tale framed to amuse the credulous Hindoo, and procure a meal to an artful priest. The ostensible want of attention to the memory of Brimha, may on a more abstracted ground be ascribed to an opinion, that the powers of procreation having been primarily set in action, and operating by a law impulsive and undeviating, whose immediate benefits exist, and are conspicuously displayed in its effects, no ritual necessity called for the commemoration of its first cause, or the propitiation of its future influence.

### **3. Hindus alienated from God, Rev. John Wilson<sup>3</sup>**

I have now seen a little of one of the most interesting portions of the great family of man; and I am filled with horror and amazement at its utter alienation from God. The Hindoos do not even in profession serve the Creator. They follow a course which is altogether opposed to reason and to natural conscience. They are the votaries of a religious system, of the moral obliquities of which it is impossible to form a right conception.

## **B. IMAGE WORSHIP**

### **SOME MISSIONARY ACCOUNTS**

#### **1. Kali worship, Rev. William Carey in August 1794<sup>4</sup>**

The last of these days was Lord's-day; I spent it in reading to and prating with my family. Towards evening I went out, when the workmen who have built the works came to me, and said that, as I was to begin making indigo tomorrow, it was much their wish that I would make an offering to Kally, the goddess of destruction, that I might have success in the work. This Kally is the most devil-like figure that can be thought of: she stands upon a dead man; her girdle is strung with small figures of human skulls, like beads upon a bracelet; she has four arms, and her tongue hangs out of her mouth below her chin; and in short, a more horrible figure can scarcely be conceived of. I took the opportunity of remonstrating with them upon the wickedness and folly of idolatry, and set my face as much as possible against their making any offering at all, and told them that I would rather lose my life than sacrifice to their idol; that God was much displeased with them for their idolatry, and exhorted them to leave it and turn to the true God. But I had the mortification of seeing, the next day, that they had been offering a kid; yet I doubt not but I shall soon see some of these people brought from darkness to the marvelous light of the gospel.



## 2. Rev. Claudius Buchanan on the Jagannath temple at Puri he visited in 1806<sup>5</sup>

I have lived to see Juggernaut; the scene at Buddruck is but the vestibule to Juggernaut; no record of ancient or modern history can give, I think, an adequate idea of the valley of death; it may be truly compared with 'the valley of Hinnom.' The idol called Juggernaut, has been considered as the Moloch of the present age; and he is justly so named, for the sacrifices offered up to him by self-devotement, are not less criminal, perhaps not less numerous, than those recorded of the Moloch of Canaan...

The walls and gates are covered with indecent emblems in massive and durable sculpture....

I have returned home from witnessing a scene which I shall never forget. At twelve o'clock of this day, being the great day of the feast, the Moloch of Hindoostan was brought out of his temple amidst the acclamations of hundreds of thousands of his worshippers; when the idol was placed on his throne, a shout was raised, by the multitude...

The throne of the idol was placed on a stupendous car or tower, about sixty feet in height, resting on wheels...

A high priest mounted the car in front of the idol, and pronounced his obscene stanzas in the ears of the people; who responded at intervals in the same strain. "These songs," he said, "are the delight of the God: his car can only move when he is pleased with the 'song.' The car moved on a little and then stopped. A boy of about twelve was then brought fourth to attempt something yet more lascivious, if per-adventure the God would move; the 'child perfected the praise' of his idol with such ardent expressions and gesture, that the god was pleased, and the multitude emitting a sensual yell of delight, urged the car along. – After a few minutes it stopped again. An aged minister of the idol then stood up, and with a long rod in his hand, which he moved with indecent action, completed the variety of this disgusting exhibition.

I felt a consciousness of doing wrong in witnessing it. I was also somewhat appalled at the magnitude and horror of the spectacle. I felt like a guilty person, on whom all eyes were fixed, and I was about to withdraw; but a scene of a different kind was now to be presented. The characteristics of Moloch's worship are obscenity and blood. We have seen the former – now comes the blood!

After the tower had proceeded some way, a pilgrim announced that he was ready to offer himself a sacrifice to the idol. He laid himself down in the road before the tower as it was moving along, lying on his face, with his arms stretched forwards; the multitude passed round him, leaving the space clear, and he was crushed to death by the wheels of the tower. A shout of joy was raised to the God; he is said to *smile* when the libation of the blood is made;



the people threw cowries, or small money, on the body of the victim, in approbation of the deed. He was left to view a considerable time, and was then carried by the *Hurries* to the Golgotha, where I have just been viewing his remains. How much I wished that the proprietors of India stock could have attended the wheels of Juggernaut, and seen this peculiar source of their revenue....

It was the morning of the Sabbath; ruminating long on the wide and extended empire of Moloch in the heathen world, I cherished in my thoughts the design of some 'Christian Institution,' which being fostered by Britain, my Christian country, might gradually undermine this baleful idolatry, and put out the memory of it for ever.

### **3. Rev. Alexander Duff on the Srirangam temple he visited in 1849<sup>6</sup>**

There are not fewer than seven great courts or squares, each surmounted by a high and massive wall one within the other, with a considerable space between. Each great square has its own gigantic granite entrance, surmounted by vast columns or towers in the middle of each wall of the square. The towers are covered all over with the usual mythologic sculptures. Each of these open courts is surrounded by minor shrines, small mandapams or Brahmanical receptacles. Through six of them we were allowed to pass, but the seventh is like 'the holy of holies,' impassable by any but the sacred Brahmans, who revel within without fear of interruption from unholy gaze or unholy tread. Close to the seventh court is the great mandapam for pilgrim worshippers, a covered roof sustained by a thousand pillars wider apart and much loftier than those of Conjevaram. To the roof of this we were taken, whence we surveyed the whole, our attention being specially directed to the gilded dome over the shrine of the principle idol. On descending it was getting dark, so we were preceded by torch-bearers. We then entered a spacious hall, in the centre of which were several large lamps and around them a few chairs. Then were brought out a large number of boxes with massive locks, and placed in a row before us. These contained a portion of the jewels and ornaments of the god of the shrine. One box was opened after another. Certainly the profusion of gold and jewels, wrought up into varied ornaments, was astonishing. There were many large vessels of solid gold, from one to several stones weight. The gold ornaments were bestud with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, etc. Such a spectacle I never saw....I had always looked on the accounts of such things as hyperbolic exaggeration before....But the most surprising part of the exhibition was the great golden idol or swamy. It was not a solid figure, but hollow; and so constructed as to be set up and taken down in parts again, like the steel armour which completely clad the knights of the middle ages. The whole was of massive gold....The figure, therefore, joined and compacted into



one, must form a huge statue of at least fifteen feet in height, all apparently of solid gold....In fact the sight of it, when erected, and covered with its ornaments, must be probably the most amazing spectacle of the sort now in the world....They were gifts of kings, princes, and nobles, when Hindooism was in its prime...

To witness the riches of this earth, which is the Lord's, so alienated from Him and devoted to a rival deity that holds millions in thralldom, was sad enough. But what shall I say as to what followed? Verily these shrines are the receptacles of the god of this world and his army of lusts!

#### **4. The Visheshwar Temple, Mrs. Colin Mackenzie, who was interested in missionary work in India<sup>7</sup>**

The name of this temple (which is the most venerated in Benares) is Bisseshwar or Visseshwar. Crossing the little court, which was very splashy from the quantity of libations poured out, we ascended a very narrow staircase, up which no stout person could go, to what might be called the leads of the temple. Here were three quadrilateral domes close together, which are being gilded from money left by Ranjit Sing. Immense sums were sent with a portion of his ashes to various temples, and amongst others to this one. The temple is very small in comparison to European places of worship. On descending, we were led along a curious passage full of images and altars like the first (the whole having much the appearance of the entry to a museum of antiquities), - to a well in which, when the former temple was desecrated by the Muhammadans under Aurangzeb, the god took refuge. It is surrounded by a railing, and offerings of flowers, water, and rice are continually thrown down to propitiate the helpless divinity. The odour of sanctity of Hindu Mythology is not more agreeable to the olfactory nerves than that of the Romish begging fraternities - so we quickly left the spot. The Brahmans seem in no way different in dress from their countrymen, except that all of those in the temple had their heads and beards partially shaved. Most of them wore red mantles. The remains of the former temple were very fine. On its ruins Aurangzeb built a mosque, which we proceeded to visit, and coming from the idol temple, I felt a relief, and even an emotion of sympathy with the simple building we entered, where, at least, there was nothing outward and visible to dishonour the Most High. The only thing which it contained was a raised place for the mullah to preach from.

#### **5. Shrine of Parvati, Mrs. Colin Mackenzie<sup>8</sup>**

Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> - Mr. Mitchell and I drove, and C. and young Mr. Mitchell rode, to see the temple of Parvati, which may be considered as the Court Chapel of the Peshwa, whose palace adjoined it, but was burnt soon



after we took Puna in 1817. It is situated on a steep hill, which we ascended by a flight of very broad steps and from below it reminded me much of some of the Italian monasteries. The view of the surrounding country and hills was very beautiful. From the parapet we saw the field of Kirki, where the Peshwa lost his last battle. He witnessed the defeat of his troops from the place where we stood. A leader who *looks on* generally does see such sights. I took a sketch of two of the temples, for besides the chief shrine of Parbati, the wife of Shiva, there is another to Shiva, or as he is here called, Shiu himself, and a third to the god of War.

They are all pyramidal, and much carved. These heathen Shrines are actually supported by *Government Funds*! If it be alleged that lands were set apart for this purpose, let them either be applied to a better, or let English Church lands be restored to the Papal See. A Government has no right to confiscate such legacies, but they are surely justified in applying them for the public benefit, and withholding them from idolatry. The hereditary dresser of Parbati, a blind Brahman, has some impressions of the truth of Christianity. He once told Mrs. Mitchell, "I am the servant of the Government not of Parbati." C. spoke to him earnestly of the necessity of making Christ our friend now, and of the happiness of belonging to Him. The whole place is surrounded by extensive groves of Mango trees, planted by the Peshwa as an atonement for his sins!

In front of Parbati's Shrine we found several men touching and making salaam to the image of a Bull in black stone, called Shiu's wahan or seat, and then giving a stroke with the bell which hung from the canopy over it. They would not let us enter the temple, but brought lights that we might see into it. Before the doors were opened, those who had worshipped the Bull fell on their faces, or salaamed at the entrance, and then putting their faces close to the gate shouted to Parbati within. When they opened the door we saw a brazen image with emerald eyes, dressed in white clothes with a turban on its head. It made one rejoice at the promise 'The idols he shall utterly abolish.' A good many Brahmans came about us, and when Mr. Mitchell and C. spoke to them, they said they did not worship the images, they only used them "to put them in mind," exactly the Popish and old heathen evasion...

### **Khandoba**

There is another very favourite idol in this part of the country called Kandoba. He is a sort of nightmare. Children are constantly consecrated to him.



## OTHER ACCOUNTS

### **6. Temple of Kamakhya at Guwahati, Jean-Baptiste Chevalier, French agent in India who visited Assam in 1755<sup>9</sup>**

Goaty [Guwahati] is one of the largest cities of the kingdom. A viceroy governs the province; he came on two occasions to pay his respects to his sovereign. The city is located at the foot of a hill on the bank of the Barampoutou. On the top of this hill is the much-revered pagoda. I asked the permission of the king to attend the sacrifice and he agreed. What a surprise it was to see an immense park surrounded with fences containing a couple (male and female) each of all species of quadrupeds and birds known in the entire kingdom. All the governors of the provinces and the chiefs of the villages have to provide their share and send it to the pagoda every three years. When the time arrives for the sacrifices, this entire fauna is immolated at the altar of the goddess...

I learned the origins, motives and circumstances of this ceremony by questioning some of the temple priests, the learned folks and the king himself. They told me that the practise was established a long time back upon the order of the goddess herself. The goddess demanded from the king of Assem, the founder of the monarchy, that such sacrifices be done for her glory, simultaneously warning him that as long as he and his successors faithfully executed this order, the kingdom would enjoy all kinds of happiness and prosperity. But that, on the contrary, failure to abide by this would result in all kinds of diseases to befall the kingdom whose inhabitants will suffer unimaginable scourges, besides plague and hunger. The bizarre connection between the tradition of the sacrifice of the Assemese and the one of Abraham makes one think about a possible connection between the two peoples...

Just as they were about to start, I entered inside the temple where the victims are brought one after the other during nine days and beheaded in front of the idol. It represents a woman of a gigantic stature, made of solid gold, as I have been assured. She wears a crown on her head, holds a book in one hand and a sabre in the other. Around here are quantities of other figures representing angels or subordinate divinities. Looking at her feet, we can see that she is stepping on many creatures, which I have been told represent demons. A multitude of yellow copper torches were lit around the altar made of ivory and encrusted with golden strips. There, varieties of aromatic wood were burning, spreading a very pleasant fragrance.

The king was sitting on a magnificent throne and presiding over the ceremony. He held in his hand, a book containing all the customs and practices. When everything was ready, I saw two gigantic elephants being escorted to the feet of the altar. The king immediately got down from his throne and, after bowing to the goddess, prayed to her to bless his kingdom and his people. He



asked her to receive with kindness, and as a mark of gratitude, his offerings. The prayer over, the two elephants were brought back to the front yard of the temple, an immense area of one league in square surrounded by walls. It was there that they succumbed under the sword of the executioner after being tied up by the four feet and the trunk with enormous iron chains between four columns where they were chained so tightly that they could not move.

Then came the rhinoceros, tigers, buffaloes and quantities of other animals of all kinds and all were subjected to the same ritual. When the sacrifice of the quadruped, lasting for several days, is over, comes the one of the volatiles and finally the one of the fishes. The large numbers of people that fill up all the yards of the temple and surrounding areas seize the meat. They eat one part and keep the other after drying them up in the sun. Each one takes some portion to his house; superstition and credulity attribute to it some wonderful effects for the soul as well as for the body.

This celebration brings in large amounts of money and food to the temple priests. Even the poorest inhabitant of the kingdom has prepared himself so that he could make his offerings. Those from the villages, who cannot attend the sacrifice, sent their donations through others and they could be assured of the carrier's honesty. The temple is cared for by more than two thousand priests dedicated to its worship, besides a great number of young girls, the most beautiful of the kingdom, devoted to dance in front of the altar during the days of the celebrations...

The temple is a vase [sic] of a surprisingly enormous size and I do not know of any such structure in the entire of Europe that can be compared to it. It is perhaps also the richest of the world, judging by the quantity of gold that has been accumulated there throughout the centuries. The source of such riches lies in the vow that a devoted king made to the goddess at a time when the kingdom was being afflicted by a certain calamity. This vow was to present her with as many golden animals as the ones that were immolated during the great sacrifice and with the same shapes and resemblances. In case his life was not long enough or if his wealth did not permit him to fulfill his promise, he should direct his descendants to do the same, on pain of malediction. The tradition adds that immediately after this vow was made, the scourge that afflicted the people, stopped. What is certain is that all princes that succeeded since then, made it a law and a duty to carry out this act of piety. It is also since then that one part of the state expenses was dedicated to it. Therefore it is difficult to count the amount of golden animals placed around the temple. I have seen elephants, rhinoceros of medium and even small sizes, and quantities of life sized replicas of other species. The king added two golden stags, as big as the ones we have in our forests in Europe, to this treasure. Although all these statues are hollow and the gold is of a very pale colour, the entire



collection as a whole represents a treasure of great value. We cross very large enclosures before entering the main temple enclosure. The priests, the priestesses and the servitors live there. In front of the first gate there is a large terrace made of stone; large steps in the centre lead to a magnificent square pond that has a surface measuring more than a quarter of a league from each side, which is also cut in stone. There, the priests and the priestesses offer their ablutions. All around this pond there are some magnificent paths, giving an impregnable shade and cutting off the rays of the sunshine...

### **7. Nathdwara, Udaipur, T.D. Broughton<sup>10</sup>**

The capital of Oodipoor is a hundred and twenty miles from hence, situated in the midst of vast ranges of mountains, and about twenty miles on this side of it is the celebrated temple of Nat,hdooara, or "the Dwelling of God." It is held in such veneration that the town in which it stands has always been respected by the Mahratta and other armies that have chanced to pass near it. The revenues of many villages are appropriated to its use, as well by the Rajas of Juodpoor and Jypoor as by the Rana himself. The former Prince keeps five hundred men constantly ready for the service of the temple, and has a *dak* or post, laid from his own capital, a distance of two hundred miles, for the sole purpose of conveying fresh flowers, which are offered every morning at sunrise upon the shrine of the idol.

### **8. Pushkar, T.D. Broughton<sup>11</sup>**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> instant we went to Pokur, or, as it is more classically called, Pooshkur; a place as highly venerated by the Hindoos as Ajmeer is by the Moosulmans... The town, which is not large, is situated on the shore of a most romantic *Pokur*, or lake, from which it takes its name. Its sanctity is derived from a *Jug*, or sacred entertainment which *Brimha* there made, in the *Sut-joog* (or golden age), for all the *Deotas*. His wife *Savitree*, instigated by *Narud*, one of the sons of *Brimha*, refused to assist at this *Jug*, and retired to the top of a high hill, about a mile from the lake, where she has now a temple, which is visited by all the pilgrims who have strength and perseverance enough to climb so high, a labour which, from the description made of it to me, is fully equivalent to the reward of bowing at the shrine of the goddess. It is at Pokur alone that an image of *Brimha*, at least one of any celebrity, is to be seen: his temple is close to the margin of the lake, small, plain, and evidently very ancient. The image, which is about the size of a man, has four faces, and is in a sitting posture, cross-legged, but neither it nor the apartment in which it is placed is distinguished by any kind of ornament.



### Temple at Pushkar destroyed by Aurangzeb

The largest temple at Pokur is one dedicated to *Barajee*, the third *Uotar*, or incarnation of *Vishnoo*. The building, as it now stands, presents only the small remains of the ancient temple, which was overthrown by the bigoted zeal of the Emperor Aurungzeb, and is said to have been one hundred and fifty feet in height and covered with the finest specimens of Hindoo sculpture. The old walls, to the heights of about twenty feet, were left entire, and have been covered in, to form the present temple, by Raja Jue Singh, Siwue of Jypoor.

### Other temples at Pushkar

The next, in point of sanctity and consequence, to this temple is one sacred to *Vishnoo*, under the name of *Budrinath*, but in which there is nothing remarkable to be seen. These four temples are of very ancient structure, and are held in particular veneration; but besides them, there are innumerable others, of more modern date, erected to every god of the Hindoo calendar.

Among these is one dedicated to Muhadeo, which is by far the most remarkable, both for the size and elegance of its structure, and the nature of its ornaments, of all the temples that Pooshkur boasts of. It was built by Anajee Seendhiya, the grandfather of the present Muha Raj. The image, and the altar on which it is placed, are of fine white marble, highly polished, and executed in a style superior to anything of the kind I have seen in India. The idol is *Punj-mookhee*, or five faced, each face crowned with the *Jutta*, or matted hair of the *Uteets*, and exhibiting that harsh and obscene expression which is the characteristic of the Indian, as well as the Roman, Priapus. The image in question together with its *Urg,ha* or altar, is precisely what one would expect to see in a temple of ancient Rome dedicated to that deity. A large building erected by Madoojee Seendhiya next attracted our notice. It contains images of *Bawanee*, *Muha Deo*, and some others of the Hindoo deities, all of white marble, but executed in a manner very inferior to the one I have just described. The interior apartment is surrounded by a range of piazzas, also of marble, designed for the accommodation of the numerous *Bueragees*, or mendicants, who make pilgrimages to Pooshkur; and for whose support the revenues of ten small villages in the district were allotted by the illustrious founder. Into all these temples we were freely admitted, except that of *Barajee*, where the *Purohit*, or priest, who attended us intimated it would be proper to go barefooted: as we were in boots we contended ourselves with observing everything from the door-way...

*Purohits* are Brahmuns who attend at all celebrated *Teeruts*, or places of religious resort, to point out the most sacred spots, and to read the necessary prayers, &c. to the pilgrims, whose names, families and places of abode they



enter carefully into a register, and receive some trifle as a compensation for their trouble. The pilgrims besides offer money, according to their means, at each of the temples they visit, and the Ghats where they bathe. With those who can afford such an expense, it is common to make the *Purohit* a present of a cow, with her horns tipped with silver, her hoofs plated with the same metal, and covered by a silken *J,hool*, or coverlet...

Besides the temples which I have described, the banks of the lake are covered with a number of smaller ones, pavilions, chuoltrees, &c. built by the neighbouring Rajas, at various periods. Many of those buildings are at present nearly, and some of them altogether, immersed in the water, the springs of the lake having risen within the last six weeks to a height beyond any that is on record.

### **9. Temples at Garhwal, William Moorcroft<sup>12</sup>**

The morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> saw us set off in a mizzling rain. We passed on our left a group of Hindu temples, decorated with sculpture. Before each of them that was of any size was a figure of Nandi, the bull of Siva, his face towards the door of the temple, and the figure of herdsman laying hold of his tail. The road ran to the east, over a rough causeway, through a thick wood of pine trees covering the side of a steep hill. The summit of the ascent, about half a mile from the village, was called Garhwa Cheli. The path then descended rapidly, between a small temple on the left, and an altar or mound of masonry, with two feet sculptured on it. These altars are very common, and, perhaps, indicate the former prevalence in these parts of the religion of Buddha, which more than any other Indian creed, employs this emblem. Going down the declivity one of the people plucked a leaf from a shrub growing out of the wall, the lower surface of which was covered with the cottony down that serves the mountaineers as tinder, catching fire readily from the sparks of a lint and steel, and burning slowly and without flame. The Nahan people call it kaphi, the Gorkhas, kapas or cotton...

### **10. Amarnath, William Moorcroft<sup>13</sup>**

This is the cave of Amarnath, a place of reputed sanctity and pilgrimage. The road to this cave proceeds from Bhuvan, along the valley of the Lidder to Ganes Bal, so called, it is said, from a rude stone figure, which is supposed to represent the Hindu divinity, Ganesa. It then continues to Pahalgam in Dakshinpara, and thence to the Pesh-bal pass; the latter part of the route is uninhabited. Beyond the pass is the lake of Sesh-nag, nine miles in circumference, and giving rise to a number of rivulets which form the Panch-tarang, or five-stream river; another pass in the mountains, the Neza-bal, lies beyond this, from which rises the Bhagavati river, flowing into the Panch-



tarang. Near this is situated the cave of Amarnath, of which the entrance is said to be one hundred yards broad, and thirty high; the depth of the cave is five hundred yards. There are no inscriptions in it, nor any sculpture; but in the most remote part of the cave, there is said to be the figure of a Gosein, seated on a pedestal, which figure increases and decreases in size with the increasing and waning moon, and at the conjunction entirely vanishes. It is customary, therefore, to visit the cave only about the full moon. The course of the Panch-tarang is not exactly known, but it is believed to pass into Ladakh, near Kartse. Persons in the cave of Amarnath assert that they can hear the barking of the dogs in Tibet.

### **11. Amarnath Cave, G.T. Vigne<sup>14</sup>**

The ceremony at the cave of Umur Nath takes place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the Hindu month Sawun (28<sup>th</sup> of July). Previously to that day not only the Hindus of Kashmir, but those from Hindustan, of every rank and caste, may be seen collecting together, and travelling up the valley of the Lidur towards this celebrated cave – which, from his description, must have been the place that Bernier intended to visit, but was prevented....

After performing their ablutions and prostrations at Gunysh Bul, the pilgrims proceed to Palgam, and thence follow up the defile on the right; the snowy peaks on the further side of the lake of the Shisha Nag appearing in the distance. The only dwelling to be found on the way beyond Palgam is about three miles thence, up the defile. I slept here. Afterwards the path, though worn by the pilgrimages of ages, is rocky and fatiguing. The people first stop and perform their ablutions at a part of the stream about a mile above Palgam.

At Nil Gunga, or the blue water, they again halt to wash and made their vows and their offerings to the stream, and again in the Umur Veyut, about sixty yards, as I was informed, below the cave itself. A second and steep ascent begins from Chundan Wareh; after which the pilgrims find themselves in a long open valley formed between the mountain peaks, rising to a thousand feet above it on each side; the valley itself being elevated above the limit of forest, and divided lengthwise by the deep and rocky cliff through which flows that branch of the river that runs from the Shisha Nag....

### **Shisha Nag**

I found it to be a small lake, about one-third of a mile in diameter, lying chiefly in a punchbowl formed by the nearly perpendicular precipices of a limestone ridge, whose strata up to the summits were as much twisted and distorted as those of the hills about Shahbad, rising from the plain of Kashmir, and with which they were most probably once upon a level, having been formed, to all appearance, during the same periods of time.



**Sona Nag**

The Sona Nag, or the Golden Lake, is a small one, lying but a short distance over the hills, on the side of the stream opposite to that where we bivouacked. The incipient Lidur flows from the Shisha Nag; and although I was prevented from seeing Umur Nath, I felt that my fatigue was in some measure repaid by having thus reached that source of the Jylum, which must be considered as inferior only in size and volume to that in the Kosah Nag, on the opposite Panjal.

**The Cave**

The last encamping place of the pilgrims is an elevated plain, distant one day's march from the Shisha Nag; after which they cross another ridge, and descend to Umur Nath. A vast multitude of men, women, and children advance towards the cave, at an hour appointed by the attendant, the Brahmins first divesting themselves of all clothing, excepting some pieces of birch-bark which do duty for fig-leaves. The cave is of gypsum (I am in possession of specimens brought thence), and shaped like a divided cone, facing to the south, and being (so I was informed) about 30 yards in height, and 15 or 20 in depth. I rather believe that there are stalactites in it, and that large icicles are formed from them, so as to connect the bottom of the cave with the roof. When the pilgrims arrive there they commence shouting, clapping their hands, and calling upon the Deity (Siva). Asra durshun payareh – "Show yourself to us," is the universal and simultaneous exclamation and prayer of prostrate thousands.

**12. Lord Auckland visits the Golden Temple, Fanny Eden<sup>15</sup>**

Our object was the great Sikh temple, where the book he [Ranjit Singh] consults as an oracle is kept. We had all to take off our shoes before we entered even the outer court. Emily and I astutely had our slippers over white satin shoes, and they were quite satisfied when our slippers were taken off. It was getting dusk and the whole city was illuminated. The temple itself was sheeted with gold, the whole outside of it, good solid gold, and a very large building. Runjeet was afraid I should not make that out as I was standing near the door, and took hold of my hand and made me feel it. The inside of the temple is more splendid still – a large gold canopy stiff with embroidery in pearls.

There is the oracle with about twenty covers over it, and priests with long white beards sitting behind a little low altar on which it is kept. Chouries are wound over it. A very small round cushion was put on the ground, upon the edge of which Runjeet instantly squatted. He pulled down George by him, also Emily and me. It was very close sitting and rather crampy. He evidently thought the women wanted something to amuse their little trivial minds, and made signs for us to go up to the altar and look at the book. A fringe of very



long pearls and emeralds about half a yard deep and a yard long is the first covering. Then the priests take off many more and there was the book open and they all bowed to it. I rather feel as if I was in the temple of Baal. I hear Runjeet told George that in consequence of coming to see that sacred place he should consider their friendship more firmly cemented, and George made a most splashy answer, about their united armies conquering the world. You will be much taken aback, I guess, when they march hand in hand and take Motcombe. Then Runjeet told us a long story how his oracle first told him to make friends with the English. I wish somebody could have sketched us all three, with the mixture of natives and English officers round us, half kneeling, half squatting. Afterwards we went to the top of a building near, to see the illuminations, and the gold temples looked splendid with the reflection of the fire.

### **13. Kalighat, Fanny Parkes<sup>16</sup>**

*January 15th 1837...* The temple is at Kali Ghat, about two miles from Calcutta. The idol is a great black stone cut into the figure of an enormous woman, with a large head and staring eyes; her tongue hangs out of her mouth, a great broad tongue down to her breast. The figure is disgusting. I gave the attendant priests a rupee for having shown me their idol, which they offered with all reverence to Kali Mai.

## **C. SOME SACRED CITIES**

### **1. Banaras, Captain Alexander Hamilton<sup>17</sup>**

Benares lies about a hundred miles farther up the river, celebrated for its sanctity by all persons over India, where paganism prevails. Here are seminaries and universities for the education of youth, and to initiate them into the mysteries of their religion... It is still in so much veneration that I have known young and old Banyans go from Surat thither over land, out of devotion, which is computed to be a distance of four hundred miles: The priests fill brass and copper pots, made in the shape of short-necked bottles, with Ganges water, which they consecrate and seal up, and send those bottles, which contain about four English gallons, all over India, to their benefactors, who make them good returns, for whoever is washed with that water just before they expire, are washed as clean from their sins as a new-born babe.

### **2. Kashi, William Hodges<sup>18</sup>**

This city anciently bore the name of Kashi, but at what period it received its present name the page of history is silent. It is built on the north side of the



river, which be here very broad, and the banks of which are very high: from the water, its appearance is extremely beautiful; the great variety of the buildings strikes the eye, and the whole view is much improved by innumerable flights of stone steps, which are either entrances into the several temples, or to the houses. Several Hindoo temples greatly embellish the banks of the river, and are all ascended to by Gauts, or flights of steps, such as I have already noticed. Many other public and private buildings possess also considerable magnificence. Several of these I have painted, and some of a large scale, such as I conceived the subjects demanded. Many buildings on the banks of the river, which engage the attention, and invite to further observation, prove, on a more minute investigation, to be only embankments, to prevent the overflowing of the water from carrying away the banks at the season of the periodical rains, and for some time after, when the river is high, and the current strong. The most considerable of these embankments is called Gelsi Gaut; the splendor and elegance of which, as a building, I was induced to examine, but found, upon ascending the large flight of steps from the river, nothing behind this beautiful cascade but the natural bank, and on the top a planted garden. In the center of the building, over the river, is a square turret, raised and covered, for the purpose of enjoying the freshness of the evening air; and, at the extreme angles, two octagon pavilions crowned with domes, which have the same destination. Most of these buildings have been erected by the charitable contributions of the wealthy, for the benefit of the public.

### **Mosque**

Nearly in the center of the city is a considerable Mahomedan mosque, with two minarets: the height from the water to the top of the minarets is 232 feet. This building was raised by that most intolerant and ambitious of human beings, the Emperor Aurungzebe, who destroyed a magnificent temple of the Hindoos on this spot, and built the present mosque, said to be of the same extent and height as the building he destroyed...

Surrounding the city are many ruins of buildings, the effects of Mahomedan intolerance. One is a large circular edifice, having evidently been a Hindoo temple, or part of one; there are still vestiges of some of the ornaments; and on one part I found the Grecian scroll.

### **3. Banaras, George Forster<sup>19</sup>**

The city of Banaras, for its wealth, costly buildings, and the number of its inhabitants, is classed in the first of those now remaining in the possession of the Hindoos. To describe with a due degree of precision the various temples dedicated at Banaras, to the most innumerable deities, and to explain the origin of their foundation with the necessary arrangement, would require a knowledge



far superior to mine in the mysterious subject of Hindoo Mythology. It is at this day enveloped in such deep obscurity, that even those pundits the most skillfully versed in the Sanscrit, are not able to render it moderately comprehensible to the generality of people.

But as some relation of a city so famous in Hindoostan, and now so well known in Europe for supplying one of the grand sources of the religious worship of the Hindoos, and being the chief repository of the science yet existing among them, may not be unacceptable to you, together with a cursory investigation of the Mythology of Brimha; the task shall be attempted with attention to the object, and, I trust, with a strict adherence to truth.

### **Aurangzeb's mosque**

At the distance of eight miles from the city of Benares, as it is approached on the river, from the eastward, the eye is attracted by the view of two lofty minarets, which were erected by Aurungzebe, on the foundation of an ancient Hindoo temple, dedicated to the Mhah Deve. The construction on this sacred ruin of so towering a Mahometan pile, which, from its elevated height, seems to look down with triumph and exultation on the fallen state of a city so profoundly revered by the Hindoos, would appear to have been prompted to the mind of Aurungzebe by a bigoted and intemperate desire of insulting their religion. If such was his wish, it hath been completely fulfilled. For the Hindoos consider this monument, as the graceful record of a foreign yoke, proclaiming to every stranger, that their favorite city has been debased, and the worship of their gods defiled. From the top of the minarets is seen the entire prospect of Benares, which occupies a space of about two miles and an half along the northern bank of the Ganges, and generally a mile in-land from the river... The irregular and compressed manner which has been invariably adopted in forming the streets of Benares, has destroyed the effects which symmetry and arrangement would have otherwise bestowed on a city, entitled, from its valuable buildings, to a preference of any capital which I have seen in India.

### **4. Aurangzeb's mosque – dishonour of Hindu religious feelings, Thomas Twining<sup>20</sup>**

It is a small mosque wholly devoid of magnificence, erected, according to Mussulman practice, upon the ruins of a Hindoo temple. The limited site on which it was built may not have admitted of the usual display of beauty or splendour, or the imperial founder may have considered it more as a monument of triumph than of grandeur – have desired that it should express contempt than command admiration. Benares was indeed taken and plundered, and given up to every excess, by Mahomed Gauri in the year 1194; but the mosque in question was constructed by Aurungzebe, who has left behind him many similar



proofs of his persecution of the Hindoos. A humane king would have lamented the past injuries of his subjects, a great one would have repaired them, but Aurungzebe, in a more enlightened age, and without the palliation of his predecessor, a barbarian and a conqueror, deliberately *augmented* the desolation of the city, the object of veneration of a whole people, and treated with derision and dishonour the religious feelings of its most peaceful inhabitants. It struck me as one of the most remarkable instances of the passive character of the Hindoos that they should have suffered the lofty minarets of this mosque to tower over their temples so long, and to be the first objects that meet the eye of the pilgrim on his approach to the far-sought sanctuary of his religion.

### **5. A gathering of Sikhs at Haridwar, Anne Deane<sup>21</sup>**

The following morning some of our party, myself among the number, made an excursion to the celebrated bathing-place of Hurdoar, where we fell in with a party of Sieks of high rank: they consisted of the Ranee Mutaab Kour, wife of Rajah Runjeet Sing; Rajah Sahib Sing, of Patialah, and his wife; Rajahs Bodge Sing and Burgwaan Sing. These people paid us every mark of respect and politeness: they were attended by a numerous retinue.

### **6. Jwala-mukhi, William Moorcroft<sup>22</sup>**

Jwala-mukhi is about five kos to the north-west of Nadaun, and is situated upon an elevated nook immediately under the mountains of Changa. It is a place of great sanctity in the estimation of the Hindus, and pilgrims come hither from all parts of India. Its holiness is owing to the inflammable gas which issues from various apertures in a temple dedicated to Devi, the wife of Mahadeo, who, as identical with the mysterious fire, is also called Jwala-mukhi, the goddess from whose mouth flame is exhaled. The vents through which the ignited gas, that is always burning in the temple of Devi, issues, are several in a shallow trough excavated on the floor, one in the north-western angle, one in the wall on the northern face, and two others on the outside of the wall: there are also some in a well within a small detached building. Observing the water in this well apparently free from vapour, I applied a lighted wick to it, and the surface was immediately ignited, though but for a short period. The same test showed the exhalation of gas from several of the apertures which were seemingly quiescent. There was no smoke, and but little smell. The interior of the temple was, indeed, blackened by smoke, but this had been generated by the offerings of Devi's worshippers, who place butter, sugar, and incense near the flame from the apertures as burnt-offerings to the goddess. The attendant brahmans were very civil, and allowed me to make what experiments I pleased. When a flame proceeded from any aperture longer and brighter than usual, an exclamation of *Ai Jwala* arose from the adoring



multitude. The temple was about twenty feet square, not in any way remarkable for its architecture, except that the columns were without capitals, and were more massive than any I remember to have seen in Hindustan... The interior of the temple has been lately painted and embellished at the expense of the Raja of Hindur.

## 7. Gorakhnath, Honoria Lawrence<sup>23</sup>

About a mile from the station there is a holy place called Goruck-naught. A succession of mango *topes* gives two or three miles of shade, and in the heart of this there are many tanks and temples. They are square, white buildings, with dome shaped roofs, and arched entrances; the ground about them is kept exceedingly neat and clean and contains some splendid single trees with seats built round them. There are also pretty gardens, with balsams, tuberose and other flowers for the worshippers to make garlands of.

Near the temple is a burying ground, for, though burning is the usual mode of disposing of a body among the Hindoos, yet some of the more sacred dead are buried. There were tombs of mason work raised over the *mohants* or priests and the some on a smaller scale over the *cheelahs*, or novices. The place swarms with *fakirs*, a most disgusting race, generally stout able-bodied men, daubed with ashes and filth, and more nearly naked than even the other Hindoos. They are impudent to the greatest degree, and with all their dirt and nudity, have a pampered appearance. Nothing human can be more horrible than they look, and we know that they practice every abomination.

One morning before sunrise we were driving through Gorucknaught, and hearing a great noise of drums, bells and horns we turned up to one cluster of temples. The largest temple was lighted within, and showed a shrine upon which I did not observe any figure, but heaps of flowers, feathers, scarlet cloth, tinsel, shells and all sorts of trumpery. Outside a troop of *fakirs* blew horns, beat drums and struck upon large bells that hung in the verandah. The worship, as far as we saw, was this: a priest with his face all muffled up except the eyes, stood before the shrine holding an earthen lamp, or rather cup of oil with many lighted wicks round its edge. This he waved slowly round his head then turned to the right, then to the left and bowed to the shrine. We turned away sick at heart. Oh when will the "saving health be known among all nation"?

## 8. Sarnath, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>24</sup>

Very early in the morning of my last day's sojourn here, I rode with General Simpson to the village of Sarnath. It is six miles north-east of Benares, and three, of the cantonments, and evidently lies on a classic soil, for, that a large and mighty city must have stood here, is amply testified by the numerous



ruins, and beautifully-formed bricks, with which all the ground, and especially the banks of a lake, which extends from east to west, are covered. The only fragment which has been preserved, is a vaulted tower about sixty feet high; it is built of granite and blocks of red sandstone, which are let into one another, and fastened without any cement, and in the upper portion some bricks have been introduced. The diameter of its base is about 100 feet, and the whole of the exterior, forms a round domed cone, similar to the Manikeeala in the Punjab. This remarkable tower is a compact mass of stone, without any open space in the interior, and merely covers a deep well, into which the corpse of a king was probably let down. A copper tablet found upon its highest summit bears an inscription, which, as far as I know, has not yet been deciphered: it is now in the museum of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta.

At an elevation of about twenty feet from the ground are several niches, surrounded by elegant arabesques, in which statues of men, women, and children, the size of life, formerly stood: some of these have been removed to Calcutta, to save them from the destructive spirit of the natives; seven statues of red sandstone, which were sadly mutilated were, however, lying about. They are the figures of a people, with flat noses, thick lips, and unusually large eyes. The hair lies perfectly smooth to the head, and falls in innumerable curls over the neck and shoulders. Some of them were quite naked, others wrapped in light garments, which are very curiously wrought, and fit tight to the body, or fall in picturesque folds. One of these figures wore a cord round the waist, exactly similar to that which distinguishes the Brahmins.

### **9. Allahabad, Honoria Lawrence<sup>25</sup>**

The city of Allahabad stands on the point of land at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna. The junction of any streams forms a sacred place to Hindoos. And at the present season there is a vast concourse of pilgrims to Allahabad. It is a curious but sad spectacle, and truly the zeal of these idolaters is a reproach to us. A tax of a rupee is levied by Government on every pilgrim and a *lakh* of rupees is collected here yearly by this infamous levy. Surely a time will come when it will be believed that a Christian nation traded in idolatry...

### **10. Allahabad, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>26</sup>**

Allahabad is one of the most frequented places of pilgrimage, because the Hindoos consider it most meritorious to rush into the purifying waves of the sister streams, and to carry some of the waters to their most distant homes. As soon as the pilgrim arrives, he sits down on the bank of the river, and has his head shaved in such a manner, that every hair may fall into the water, because the holy books promise for every hair so sacrificed, a residence of a



million of years in heaven! After he is shaven he bathes, and on the same day, or at least, on the following day, he performs the funeral rites for his deceased ancestors. Many of these fanatics here put an end to their existence: they go in a boat to the spot where the two sacred streams meet, and, after having concluded certain prescribed ceremonies, and tied three large water jugs round their bodies, they sink into the stream. Others have thrown themselves with such impetuosity into the sacred depths, that they were not seen to rise again.

In the month of February, especially, thousands of these devotees, rich and poor, come here together: they regard the sacred stream with the same sensations, as the thirsty wanderer in the desert beholds the well of the oases. Their souls seem to be ravished, their exhausted frames are invigorated by a new strength, and, with redoubled steps they praise the name of their god, with increasing fervour. A rajah, attended by a large train, was still here on our arrival, and had pitched his tents under mango trees.

The fort, which was built by the Emperor Akbar of blocks of red stone, is situated on the tongue of land at the junction of the river...In the middle of the fort stands the ancient granite-column, with inscriptions in Pali and Sanscrit...

An ancient Hindoo temple lies upon the beach below the level of the sacred river: its subterranean chambers are paved with flags, and rest upon columns; the Lingam Patalpuri is preserved here, and lighted by lamps.

## D. RIVERS SACRED

### GANGES

#### 1(a) Father Matteo Ripa on bathing in the Ganges<sup>27</sup>

The same evening, I returned to Sciantanagor. As I was walking there one morning on the bank of the river, I noticed a large number of men, natives, who were bathing in it quite naked, and but a few paces away, within sight of the men, were a number of women, also quite naked, and occupied in the same function, yet, the men did not look towards the women, nor did the women look at the men: on both sides they were busy washing themselves, without the slightest immodesty; but, when I praised it to the aforesaid Capuchin Father Felice, he explained the mystery to me and told me, what I still heard from others, that the Idolaters of the Great Mogol believe the water of the Ganges to be so holy that it has the virtue of purifying the soul from every stain of sin, while the body is being cleansed in it. And so there are many families which earn their livelihood simply by carrying inland for sale vases filled with this water.



**(b) Oath on Ganges, Father Wendel<sup>28</sup>**

Those who are informed as concerns the veneration in which the Ganges is held by the Indian gentiles will have no difficulty in understanding this type of oath which they are accustomed to make. It is rather like the swearing of the ancients by the Styx (though in another sense). To swear by the Ganges is, according to them, to commit oneself in a manner which one cannot fail to fulfill without committing the most severe betrayal and sacrilege, followed by an infallible punishment.

**(c) Bathing in the Ganges, De Grandpre<sup>29</sup>**

The Indians bathe at least once a day as the precept commands them. I have passed whole days in looking at them; men, women, and children bathe together without the smallest indecency. They leave their shoes on the bank, and sprinkle themselves as they go into the river: when they are up to the middle in water, they take off their apron (*pagne*) and wash it, perform the ablutions directed by their religion, put on their apron again, and come out. Often some Bramins come to bathe, bringing with them a small brass vessel of the shape of a censer, in which are some grains about the size a pea: these they throw one at a time into the river, uttering, in a low tone of voice, a prayer or two. They then sprinkle themselves slightly on the back, touch their temples with the first joint of their thumb, wash their apron, and retire. It is to be remarked, that the ceremony of washing the apron is observed by every individual; a proof that the precept was given for the purpose of cleanliness...

**Worship of Ganga**

Besides the ceremony of bathing, the Indians pay a regular worship to the Ganges. They make offerings to it of oil, cocoa, and flowers, which they expose on its banks, to be washed away by the stream. When they have a friend at sea, and would offer vows for his return, they light in the evening some small lamps, filled with oil and cocoa, and placing them in earthen dishes, which they adorn with garlands, they commit them in the same manner to the stream: the river is sometimes covered with these lights. If the dish sinks speedily, it is a bad omen for the object of their vows; but they abandon themselves to the most pleasing hopes, if they can observe their lamp shining at a distance, and if it goes so far as to be at length out of sight without any accident happening to extinguish it, it is a sure token, that their friend will return in safety.

**(d) Holy Ganges, Thomas Twining<sup>30</sup>**

Six coss farther we reached Sooty, a small village on the right bank, and from which this part of the Kasimbazaar river takes its name, being



called the Sooty Nullah, or small stream of Sooty....Soon after entering this strait my attention was excited by a considerable noise among my people on the roof of my boat, over my head. I easily guessed the cause of this, before the arrival of one of my servants to tell me, that we were approaching the "Great River." I quitted my room, and went upon deck. Here I found my boatmen and servants all collected, and looking with great eagerness ahead of the budgerow towards the north-east, the direction, nearly, in which we were sailing. The rest of the boats, which were pressed together in a channel not wider than the Thames at Hampton, exhibited the same display of earnest curiosity and feeling....After proceeding half a mile farther the object of all this enthusiasm became visible over a point of land we were to pass. In an instant a clamorous expression of joy pervaded the whole fleet; every one raised his hand repeatedly to his head, and some bent and touched the deck, in sign of humility and respect. The magnificent appearance of the great river, now fully open before us, and the strong effusion of pious feeling of so many persons, not certainly towards the stream itself, but towards the Power which made it flow, towards that Being who can hold the waters of the earth in the hollow of his hand, formed altogether one of the most impressive scenes I had ever witnessed. I was deeply struck with the wonderful grandeur of this vast river...The Ganges here was so wide at this season that objects upon the opposite shore, and even the line of the shore itself, were not distinctly visible. I paid particular attention to this circumstance, as the best by which I could form a comparative judgment of the stream. On either side, to the north-west and south-east, the expanse of water was uninterrupted as far as the eye could reach. This noble river had already flowed 1000 miles through the plains of India, and was yet 400 miles from the sea. Its depth was sometimes more than thirty feet, and its course was at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour. In its progress it had been joined by eight rivers as large as the Thames.

**(e) The piety of the boatmen on the Ganges, who prayed every morning at the commencement of the day's journey, Lady Maria Nugent<sup>31</sup>**

There is something very striking, and even affecting, in the piety (superstition if so you please to call it,) of these poor Hindoos, and, whenever I see them in the water, with their eyes lifted up to heaven, and their hands clasped, I cannot avoid giving them credit for real feelings of religion; and I am certain, that, whatever their mistakes or superstitions may be, such prayers, offered in purity of heart, are acceptable to the Almighty.



- (f) **Captain Thomas Skinner of H.M. 31st [Huntingdonshire] Regiment, who undertook an excursion to the sources of the Jumna and the Ganga, narrated the excitement with which his Hindu followers greeted the sight of the Ganga after an arduous journey in the mountains<sup>32</sup>**

If the sound of Jumona excited my followers to a high pitch, at merely the commencement of their pilgrimage, how much more so would the thrice-welcome shout of *Gunga Jee!* when they had at length gained it after a painful journey of more than thirty days. *Gunga Jee!* was the universal cry for some minutes; and *Gunga Jee!* was echoed by the woods and hills around, till it reached the ears of the slowest of my stragglers, when, calling upon its name long before they saw it, they endeavoured to rush forward, and enjoy the sight they had been so long toiling to obtain. The Hindoos salaam'd and muttered its name over and over again; and even the unbending Mahometan seemed in some way softened by the scene. I sat on one side, to allow full scope to their feelings, affected by the beauty of the picture as much as they were by the veneration of the river.

## 2. Narmada

### **Sacred Narmada, James Forbes<sup>33</sup>**

From my little encampment on the banks of the Nerbudda, although accustomed to such spectacles at Baroche and Surat, I have been frequently astonished at the number of both sexes in the river during great part of the day. From Zinore to Chandode the stream is reckoned peculiarly holy; and there not only religious purity, but healing efficacy, is annexed to the ablution. Pilgrims from distant provinces resort thither for the cure of different complaints: they do not, I believe, entirely rely on the virtue of the water for convalescence, but apply also to the medical skill of the Brahmins, who are the principal physicians in India.

## 3. Indus

### **Veneration of Indus by Hindus in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>34</sup>**

It is difficult even for an European, to view that noble stream without admiration, not unmixed with awe: the Oriental goes a step beyond, and from admiration directly proceeds to adoration. The Pujara (votaries of the river) are remarkable for the rigidity of their fasts, which generally last forty days together. During that period they avoid eating, drinking, smoking and other enjoyments, at all times from midnight till sunset. Every evening before breaking the fast, they recite the Sindhi verses called "Panjara Darya Shaha



ja." When the forty days are concluded they go to the Indus, or if the river be far off, to some well; repeat certain prayers and hymns; sip water three times from the palm of the hand, and after eating a bit of the kind of cake called Patasho, return home.

The following is a specimen of a Sindh Munajat or hymn often recited in honour of the Indus-

O thou beneficent stream!

O Khizr, thou kind of kings!

O thou that flowest in thy power and might!

Send thou joy to my heart!...

## E. RELIGIOUS LEADERS

### Swami Narain [Gujarat], Bishop Heber<sup>35</sup>

Some good had been done, Mr. Williamson said, among many of these wild people, by the preaching and popularity of the Hindoo reformer, Swaamee Narain who had been mentioned to me at Baroda. His morality was said to be far better than any which could be learned from the Shaster. He preached a great degree of purity, forbidding his disciples so much as to look on any woman whom they passed. He condemned theft and bloodshed; and those villages and districts, which had received him, from being among the worst, were now among the best and most orderly in the provinces. Nor was this all, insomuch as he was said to have destroyed the yoke of caste, – to have preached one God, and, in short, to have made so considerable approaches to the truth, that I could not but hope he might be an appointed instrument to prepare the way for the Gospel...

### Visit from Swami Narain

About eleven o'clock I had the expected visit from Swaamee Narain, to my interview with whom I had looked forward with an anxiety and eagerness which, if he had known it, would, perhaps, have flattered him. He came in a somewhat different style from all which I expected, having with him near 200 horsemen, mostly well-armed with matchlocks and swords, and several of them with coats of mail and spears. Besides them he had a large rabble on foot, with bows and arrows, and when I considered that I had myself more than fifty horse, and fifty musquets and bayonets, I could not help smiling, though my sensations were in some degree painful and humiliating, at the idea of two religious teachers meeting at the head of little armies, and filling the city, which was the scene of their interview, with the rattling of quivers, the clash of shields, and the tramp of the war-horse. Had our troops been



opposed to each other, mine, though less numerous, would have been, doubtless far more effective from the superiority of arms and discipline. But, in moral grandeur, what a difference was there between his troop and mine. Mine neither knew me, nor cared for me; they escorted me faithfully and would have defended me bravely, because they were ordered by their superiors to do so, and as they would have done for any other stranger of sufficient worldly rank to make such an attendance usual. The guards of Swaamee Narain were his own disciples and enthusiastic admirers, men who had voluntarily repaired to hear his lessons, who now took a pride in doing him honour, and who would cheerfully fight to the last drop of blood rather than suffer a fringe of his garment to be handled roughly. In the parish of Hodnet there were once, perhaps, a few honest countrymen who felt something like this for me; but how long a time must elapse before any Christian Teacher in India can hope to be thus loved and honoured! Yet surely there is some encouragement to patient labour which a Christian minister may derive from the success of such men as these in India, – inasmuch as where others can succeed in obtaining a favourable hearing for doctrines, in many respect, at variance with the general and received system of Hindooism, – the time may surely be expected, through God’s blessing, when *our* endeavours also, may receive their fruit, and our hitherto almost barren Church may “keep house and be a joyful mother of children.”

...the holy man...was a middle-sized, thin, plain-looking person, about my own age, with a mild and diffident expression of countenance, but nothing about him indicative of any extraordinary talent...

...I said, “have you any objection to communicate some part of your doctrine now?” It was evidently what he came to do, and his disciples very visibly exulted in the opportunity of his, perhaps, converting me. He began, indeed, well, professing to believe in one only God, the Maker of all things in Heaven and earth, who filled all space, upheld and governed all things, and, more particularly, dwelt in the hearts of those who diligently sought him; but he alarmed me by calling the God whom he worshipped Krishna, and by saying that he came down to earth in ancient times, had been put to death by wicked men through Magic, and that since his time many false revelations had been pretended, and many false divinities set up. This declaration, I say, alarmed me, because, notwithstanding the traits of resemblance which it bore to the history of our Lord, traits which are in fact to be found in the midst of all the uncleanness and folly in the popular legends respecting Krishna, I did not like the introduction of a name so connected with many obscene and monstrous follies. I observed, therefore, that I always had supposed that Hindoos called the God and Father of all, not Krishna but Brihm, and I wished, therefore, to know whether his God was Brihm, or somebody distinct from him? The name



of Brihm appeared to cause great sensation among his disciples, of whom some whispered with each other, and one or two nodded and smiled as if to say "that is the very name." The Pundit also smiled and bowed, and with the air of a man who is giving instruction to a willing and promising pupil, said, "a true word it is that there is only one God who is above all and in all things, and by whom all things are. Many names there may be, and have been, given to him who *is* and is *the same*, but whom we also as well as the other Hindoos call Brihm. But there is a spirit in whom God is more especially, and who cometh from God, and is with God, and is likewise God, who hath made known to men the will of the God and Father of all whom, we call Krishna and worship as God's image, and believe to be the same as the sun 'Surya.'"

...I then asked if he read the Persian character, and on his answering in the negative, I expressed my concern that I had no copies of our Sacred Books with me in the Nagree, but said that if he would accept a volume or two, by way of keeping me in his remembrance, I would send them to him either from Kairah or Bombay....

I told him as well as I could, (for to say the truth my fluency had begun to fail) what Christians and Mussulmans thought as to the worship of images; but did not decline receiving some paltry little prints of his divinity in various attitudes, which I said I should value as keepsakes. I asked about castes, to which he answered, that he did not regard the subject as of much importance, but that he wished not to give offence; that people might eat separately or together in this world, but that above "oopur," pointing to heaven, those distinctions would cease, where we should be all "ek ekhee jat," (one like another). A little further conversation of no great consequence followed...On the whole it was plain that his advances towards truth had not yet been so great as I had been told, but it was also apparent that he had obtained a great power over a wild people, which he used at present to a good purpose...

## F. HINDUS IN SINDH

### 1. Conversion of Hindus to Islam in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>36</sup>

Conversion of the Hindoos to Islam has sensibly diminished, as might be expected, since it ceased to be compulsory. Formerly it must have proceeded so rapidly as almost to threaten the very existence of Hinduism; at Mathara, Hala and other places, there are still whole streets full of Nau-Muslim [New Moslems], as the converted pagans are termed by the Faithful. The ceremony of conversion is as follows: The Hindoo is bathed from head to foot, dressed in pure garments, generally of a black colour, and taken to the Mosque to listen to a Maulud, of which he does not understand a word. He is then mounted



upon a horse, or placed in a palanquin and carried round the town, accompanied by a crowd of people firing guns, performing on musical instruments, and displaying other signs of joy. When he dismounts, pieces of money are thrown upon his head, and are afterwards given to him as a present. He is then taken to the house of the Kazi, who chooses him a name. Finally, he mentions some caste into which he wishes to be received, and is circumcised with all due solemnity. This last measure is omitted in the initiation of females; in all other points the ceremony is the same. It is presumed and believed that the proselytes are afterwards instructed in the rules of the strange religion; generally speaking, however, they are left in almost utter ignorance of them. They frequently retain their aversion of beef and other equally unmistakable proofs of a heathen origin. The Moslems, here as elsewhere, honour new converts in theory and despise them in practice; for the advantage of their religion, however, they are careful not to make any display of contempt and seldom neglect to provide them with a wife and some kind of employment.

The exigencies of their peculiar position have compelled the Sindh Hindoos to relax one of their strictest rules and re-admit members of their own body whom force or persuasion separated from them. This, however, is confined to those places where the Hindoos are not sufficiently numerous to be able to reject such persons. As has been before mentioned, in some towns they are much more strict than in others. For instance, at Kurrachee, where the Moslems are in the minority, one of the riches merchants was not permitted to return to his caste. He was a Tohryal; (circumcised), and had tasted impure meats; this was deemed a sufficient objection against him, and although he has for years conformed to the practice of his former faith, and has been most liberal in fees, donations and alms, he is still compelled to eat and drink alone. At Shikarpur, and other places, this would not have been the case.

During the native rule any attempt at apostatising from the Moslem faith would infallibly have incurred condign punishment. Under our government the candidate applies for a written permission, directed to the Kardar, or revenue officer, and a circular to the Mahajans (merchants), advising them that they may re-admit the applicant. The apostate-Shaykh then applies to the Brahmans, and spends some time and a considerable sum of money in cajolery and bribery. At last the priest yields and asks the candidate three times in a set phrase whether he be willing and ready to return to the faith of his forefathers. This being duly answered in the affirmative, the candidate is desired to name his terms, which are raised by infinite haggling and chaffering to the utmost of his means, and he solemnly promises to obey the Brahmans in every thing. His head is then shaved and he is directed to feed cows in the jungle for about a week, during which time he wears a skull cap and cloth round the waist. A staff is placed in his hand, but no slippers are allowed. After this he returns



home, his head is again shaved, and the place where the Choti ought to be is left untouched by the razor.

After the candidate's house has been purified by cowdung, Brahmans repair to it for the purpose of praying and performing some minor ceremonies. Again the candidate is asked if he be willing to return to Hinduism, and receives from the priests certain rules of conduct, which he is ordered strictly to follow. Presents of money, clothes, grain, clarified butter and other edibles are given to those who officiate; the latter then name some particular place of pilgrimage which the candidate must visit. This is imperative, but the distance of the holy spot, the time to be spent there, and the alms to be distributed, are proportioned to the pilgrim's means. When he returns, he must feast a number of Brahmans, and recommence a course of offerings; he is also expected to give small presents of sweetmeats to all his brotherhood. Thus concludes the ceremony; the candidate being now supposed to be restored to his former state of purity.

## **2. Hindu religion in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>37</sup>**

The Hindoo religion is not to be found in a state of purity in Sindh. To this general statement the only exceptions are a few Brahmans, who study their Scriptures in Sanscrit, and possibly have visited India, the fountain-head of their superstitions. As has been before said, Hinduism here is mixed up with the heterogeneous elements of Islam, and the faith of Nanak Shah. A Hindoo will often become the Murid (follower) of a Mussulman, and in some cases the contrary takes place. When we consider that the religion of Brahma was at one time established throughout the province, that as late as the seventeenth century, the Hindoos were reckoned to be ten times as numerous as their conquerors, and, finally, that all the great Pirs revered by the Moslems have classical Hindoo names, we must conclude that the spots accounted holy by the pagans were seized upon by the followers of Mohammed. Some of them bear indubitable signs of their Polytheistic origin, in Yonis (natural or artificial holes in solid rock), Lingams carved in stone and placed upon the margins of tanks or pools, together with many other equally unmistakable evidences. From the Sikhs, the Sindh Hindoo has learned to simplify his faith: to believe in one God, whom he calls Khuda, Thakur and Bhagwan, and to assent to the doctrine of a future state of rewards in Sarg (Paradise), and punishments in Narg (Hell). The male and female Avatar, such as Vishnu and Shiva, Lakshmi and Devi, are considered by them as intercessors with the Deity, and hold the same position as the Paighambar or prophets of the Moslems. The Pirs and holy men are revered as sub-intercessors, whose superogatory piety enables them to aid their fellow creatures in a spiritual way. These saints never die, but even their tombs can listen to and forward the prayers of their votaries....



### **3. Prayer book of Hindus in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>38</sup>**

Most Hindoos of any education in Sindh have a Pothi, or prayer-book for private devotion. The character used is Shikashtah of the worst description, written either by the devotee for his own benefit, or handed down from father to son. Such volumes are treated with the greatest respect, and covered with one or more clothes, lest profane hands should touch the binding: they are seldom shown to strangers. The following is a list of the usual contents of such books:

A short poem in Persian called the Sri Kishan Namō, because after every fourth line come the words "Sri Kishan Gao, Sri Kishan Gao."

The Sri Ganes Namō, an address (poetical as usual) to Ganesha, praying for prosperity and the acquisition of wealth.

Sri Gopal Hari, a prayer to that well known Avatar.

Short extracts, in verse and prose, from the Bhagawat: these are generally in the Persian and sometimes in the Panjabi language.

#### **The Sukhmani of Nanak Shah**

A number of Madah, Panjara and Munajat to the different Pirs, in Persian, Panjabi and Sindhi. Most Hindoos know several of these by heart and are in the habit of reciting them daily. They are believed to be peculiarly efficacious in a temporal, as well as a spiritual sense, if repeated at a time of need.

A few prayers and hymns addressed to the Creator in the Shastri (Sanskrit), Persian, Panjabi and Sindhi tongues. Those composed in the dead language are rare, and seldom, if ever, understood by the reciters. Compositions in the three latter dialects very much resemble those of the Moslems in style and ideas. As a general rule the Creator is not nearly so often addressed as his creatures.

Detached verses in praise of Krishna and the other Hindoo demigods, generally in Panjabi or Jatki, so composed that they may be sung to the different Rag and Ragini – musical modes. A few of these are in the form of a dialogue, as between Krishna and a worshipper; a mother and her son: suggesting the idea of rude beginnings of a drama.

The Pothi concludes with a variety of astrological tables, simple computations for determining lucky and unlucky days, a Fal-Namō or two, prescriptions in medicine, and other such semi-religious compositions.

### **G. THOUGHTS ON RELIGION IN INDIA, CAPTAIN LEOPOLD VON ORLICH<sup>39</sup>**

In no country in the world does the religion of the inhabitants appear so prominent as in India, where every town has its different temples, from the



meanest building which encloses the rudest idol, to the most gorgeous deities enshrined in pagodas with lofty towers, spacious court-yards, splendid colonnades, and walled tanks. While priests and devotees crown the idols, and bring offerings of fruit and flowers, the people perform their devotions at sunrise, standing in the water, bathing, or throwing water over their heads. During the daytime the men are attracted by singing to the sacred place, as well as graceful groups of veiled women, who bring their offerings to the divinity.

A strict Brahmin is occupied four hours every day in the performance of all his superstitious ceremonies; but if he is engaged in worldly pursuits, he may fulfill his religious duties in half an hour; and a man of a lower caste is content with frequently repeating the name of his god while he is bathing. On holydays, the people go in procession with palm branches, flowers, pictures of idols, cars, flags, and lanterns, made of silk, or of coloured and gilt paper, on long poles. The gaily dressed multitude in their picturesque costume, and the tastefully decorated symbols of their worship, impart an extremely animated, cheerful, and splendid appearance to such processions. Pilgrims, fakirs, and religious mendicants, on the way to their sacred places, meet the traveller at every turn, some in the dress of their order, and some carrying the symbols of the god whom they are going to worship, and with whose name they salute every body they meet.

But with all this external religious pomp and splendour, with the strict observance of usages and ceremonies, since the time of Menu, Hindooism has deviated and fallen away from its original purity. Several of the deities have been neglected, others have been substituted, the dead are worshipped, sects have been formed, monotheism is fallen, and the belief in a god who pardons sin, without the necessity of repentance, as well as the neglect of the Vedas, has become general.

The Vedas assign four great periods (Yugas) to the development of the world; and to the Almighty the three great qualities, first of creation (Brahma); secondly, of preservation (Vishnoo); and, thirdly, of destruction (Shiva). They say that the angels assembled before the throne of the Almighty, and humbly asked him what he himself was. He replied, "Were there another besides me, I would describe myself through him. I have existed from eternity, and shall remain to eternity. I am the first great cause of every thing that exists in the east and the west, in the north and the south, above and below: I am every thing, older than every thing, King of kings: I am the truth: I am the spirit of the Creation, the Creator himself. I am knowledge, and holiness, and light. I am *all mighty*."

Though this fundamental principle no longer prevails, though the objects of devotion are no longer the same, yet this religion still exercises as powerful



an influence over the people as in the most remote ages; and, though the deism of the Vedas as the true faith, including in itself all other forms, has been displaced by a system of polytheism and idolatry, has been nearly forgotten, and is recollected only by a few priests and philosophers, yet the belief in a Being far exalted above all, has not been obliterated. The visible and symbolical part of religion gained the superiority over the pure and sublime, by the obstinate and blind adherence of the priests to antiquated forms, and by their encouraging the adoration of new deities and symbols. In the Shasters of this new creed, the eighteen Pooranas, which are not by Veisia, the compiler of the Vedas, but by different authors about the ninth century after Christ, and partly complied from more ancient traditions, we find accounts of the creation, philosophical speculations, instruction in religious ceremonies, genealogies, historical fragments, and innumerable legends, of the deeds of the gods, heroes, and sages...





## **Social Structure**

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- A. Some general observations**
- B. Brahmins**
- C. Kshatriyas**
- D. Vaishyas**
- E. Shudras**
- F. Outcastes**

### **A. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

#### **1. Distinction of ranks a sign of an advanced society, William Robertson<sup>1</sup>**

From the most ancient accounts of India we learn that the distinction of ranks and separation of professions were completely established there. This is one of the most undoubted proofs of a society considerably advanced in its progress. Arts in the early stages of social life are so few, and so simple, that each man is sufficiently master of them all, to gratify every demand of his own limited desires. A savage can form his bow, point his arrows, rear his hut, and hollow his canoe, without calling in the aid of any hand more skilful than his own. But when time has augmented the wants of men, the productions of art become so complicated in their structure, or so curious in their fabric, that a particular course of education is requisite towards forming the artist to ingenuity in contrivance and expertness in execution. In proportion as refinement spreads, the distinction of professions increases, and they branch out into more numerous and minute subdivisions. Prior to the records of authentic history, and even before the most remote area to which their own traditions pretend to reach, this separation of professions had not only taken place among the natives of India, but the perpetuity of it was secured by an institution, which must be considered as the fundamental article in the system



of their policy. The whole body of the people was divided into four orders or casts...

## **2. Object to provide for the happiness of all, William Robertson<sup>2</sup>**

The regulations of Indian policy, with respect to the different orders of men, must necessarily, at some times, check genius in its career, and confine to the functions of an inferior cast talents fitted to shine in a higher sphere. But the arrangements of civil government are made, not for what is extraordinary, but for what is common; not for the few, but for the many. The object of the first Indian legislators was to employ the most effectual means of providing for the subsistence, the security, and happiness of all the members of the community over which they presided. With this view they set apart certain races of men for each of the various professions and arts necessary in a well-ordered society, and appointed the exercise of them to be transmitted from father to son in succession. This system, though extremely repugnant to the ideas which we, by being placed in a very different state of society, have formed, will be found, upon attentive inspection, better adapted to attain the end in view, than a careless observer, at first sight, is apt to imagine. The human mind bends to the law of necessity, and is accustomed not only to accommodate itself to the restraints which the condition of its nature, or the institutions of its country, impose, but to acquiesce in them. From his entrance into life, an Indian knows the station allotted to him, and the functions to which he is destined by his birth. The objects which relate to these are the first that present themselves to his view. They occupy his thoughts, or employ his hands; and, from his earliest years, he is trained to the habit of doing with ease and pleasure that which he must continue through life to do.

### **To this may be ascribed that high degree of perfection**

To this may be ascribed that high degree of perfection conspicuous in many of the Indian manufacturers; and though veneration for the practices of their ancestors may check the spirit of invention, yet, by adhering to these, they acquire such an expertness and delicacy of hand, that Europeans, with all the advantages of superior science, and the aid of more complete instruments, have never been able to equal the exquisite execution of their workmanship. While this high improvement of their more curious manufacturers excited the admiration, and attracted the commerce of other nations, the separation of professions in India, and the early distribution of the people into classes, attached to particular kinds of labour, secured such abundance of the more common and useful commodities, as not only supplied their own wants, but ministered to those of the countries around them.



### 3. Division into castes responsible for permanence of institutions, William Robertson<sup>3</sup>

To this early division of the people into casts, we must likewise ascribe a striking peculiarity in the state of India; the permanence of its institutions, and the immutability in the manners of its inhabitants. What now is in India always was there, and is likely still to continue: neither the ferocious violence and liberal fanaticism of its Mahomedan conquerors, not the power of its European masters, have effected any considerable alteration. The same distinctions of condition take place, the same arrangements in civil and domestic society remain, the same maxims of religion are held in veneration, and the same sciences and arts are cultivated. Hence, in all ages, the trade with India has been the same; gold and silver have uniformly been carried thither in order to purchase the same commodities with which it now supplies all nations; and from the age of Pliny to the present times, it has been always considered and execrated as a gulf which swallows up the wealth of every other country, that flows incessantly towards it, and from which it never returns. According to the accounts which I have given to the cargoes anciently imported from India, they appear to have consisted of nearly the same articles with those of the investments in our own times; and whatever difference we may observe in them seems to have arisen, not so much from any diversity in the nature of the commodities which the Indians prepared for sale, as from a variety in the tastes, or in the wants of the nations which demanded them.

### 4. Caste main impediment to conversion of Hindus, Giuseppe Maria, the Capuchin friar of the Franciscan order, in a letter, from Bettiah in north-western Bihar in 1758, to the Prefect of Propaganda Fide in Rome<sup>4</sup>

Appearances in this Kingdom [of Bettiah] are at present favourable, and many would embrace our Holy Religion were it not for Cast (*la Casta*), that is, were they not afraid of being expelled from the Clan (*la Stirpe*). Your Eminence must know already that among the Hindus (*Gentili*) of the Kingdom of the Mogol, and of the neighbouring Kingdoms, there is an irrefragable Law, forbidding each of them to eat and marry outside their own Clan. Besides, every Clan has its subdivisions, as for instance the Brahmins: some are of the Misir Clan; some of the Dube Clan; some of the Patak Clan; some of the Ciube Clan... Each subaltern Clan forms one or more Congregations, in which together they judge all the affairs of their Clan, and from their judgment there is no appeal, so that, if for some defect they expel a member from their Congregation, it is not in the power of the King or of anyone else to re-establish him, and one thus excommunicated



cannot be admitted to another Clan or Congregation, but is considered by all as infamous, and finds no one to marry him or to give his children in marriage... On this account, many who have known the truth of our Religion, have asked us to dispense them in these things [i.e., allow them to continue many caste customs and ceremonies], which they cannot omit without being expelled from the Clan. But, as we answered them that it is not in our power to permit what God has forbidden, the greater number have drawn back...

##### **5. Mountstuart Elphinstone in a written reply to the House of Commons in August 5, 1832 on mobility in India despite the caste system<sup>5</sup>**

Notwithstanding the institution of castes, there is no country where men rise with more ease from the lowest rank to the highest. The first nabob (now king) of Oude, was a petty merchant; the first peishwa, a village accountant; the ancestors of Holcar were goatherds; and those of Scindia, slaves. All these, and many other instances, took place within the last century. Promotions from among the common people to all the ranks of civil and military employment, short of sovereignty, are of daily occurrence under native states, and this keeps up the spirit of the people, and in that respect partially supplies the place of popular institutions. The free intercourse of the different ranks also keeps up a sort of circulation and diffusion of such knowledge and such sentiments as exist in the society. Under us, on the contrary, the community is divided into two perfectly distinct and dissimilar bodies, of which the one is torpid and inactive, while all the sense and power seems concentrated in the other...

##### **6. Castes in Calcutta, James Mitchell<sup>6</sup>**

They are divided into different Casts or Tribes, each having peculiar customs, and no domestic intercourse with each other from the Bramin Cast, the highest to the Paria Caste the lowest, which consist of such as have been expelled from the other Casts for misbehaviour; they are held in the highest contempt, do all the drudgery and being freed from all restraint indulge in every intemperance: So tenacious are the Casts of their Observances that I have known them detained on board by gales of wind for two or three days without tasting meat or drink, as it was contrary to their rules to eat any food but such as was dressed by their own Cast or drink in their own Vessells; if by accident or design any of their Vessels had been polluted by the touch of those of different persuasion, it was either broken, or if metal remelted and fashioned anew before again used. Except the Bramins, who seemed lofty and distant, and the Paria's abject and vile, the intermediate Casts, if not disturbed in their religious worship and peculiar customs, appeared to be mild and docile; much oppressed by their Raja's, Nabobs &ca. who are Mahametans and often fleece



and torment them if suspected to have wealth, which makes them carefully conceal any sums they may have saved below ground and it is supposed to be to an amazing amount in the kingdom of Bengal.

## **B. BRAHMINS**

### **1. Trustees of knowledge, the French Jesuit, Father Pons, in a letter dated 23 November, 1740<sup>7</sup>**

In all times the Brahmins were the sole trustees of the sciences in India...the sciences and the fine arts which had developed with such glory and success by the Greeks and Romans, also flowered in India (thanks to) the Brahmins, and, above all, to those among them who renounced the world and became sanyasis...

Never have analysis and synthesis been more felicitously used than in their grammatical work on the Sanskrit language...

The Brahmins developed all the branches of mathematics; algebra was not unknown to them; but astronomy, whose goal was astrology, was the principal subject of their study... as with the Greeks, many schools of philosophy flourished...

### **2. Of unquestioned nobility, Father Saignes in a letter to a lady in Toulouse<sup>8</sup>**

The Brahmas are... the most ancient and the most unquestioned nobility in the world, for it is unheard of that any member of this first caste has ever married beneath his station. They are the trustees of the Law, the Gurus or Priests of the Gods.

### **3. Most noble, Alexander Dow<sup>9</sup>**

The Hindoos have, from all antiquity, been divided into four great tribes, each of which comprehends a variety of inferior casts. These tribes do not intermarry, eat, drink, or in any manner associate with one another, except when they worship at the temple of Jagga-nat in Orissa, where it is held a crime to make any distinction. The first and most noble tribe are the Brahmins, who alone can officiate in the priesthood, like the Levites among the Jews. They are not however excluded from government, trade, or agriculture, though they are strictly prohibited from all menial offices by their laws. They derive their name from Brihma, who they allegorically say, produced the Brahmins from his head, when created the world.



#### 4. Of the Brahmins, Robert Orme<sup>10</sup>

Every son of a Brachman inherits the priesthood of his father: from hence their numbers are more than requisite to attend the service of their gods; and many of them are seen versant in the common occupations of life, with no other distinctions than that of particular reverence paid to their persons by all who accost them, being every where considered as the highest cast of Gentoos.

The influence of priestcraft over superstition is nowhere so visible as in India. All the commerces of life have a strict analogy with the ceremonies of religion; and the Brachman has inculcated such a variety of strange persuasions, that the Gentoo finds himself every hour under the necessity of consulting his spiritual guide. The building of a pagoda, and maintaining within it a set of priests, is believed the best action which human virtue is capable of. Every offence is capable of being expiated by largesses to the Brachmans, prescribed by themselves according to their own measures of service and sensuality.

Nevertheless it may be asserted, that if ever superstition produced an universal good, it is in Indostan, where we see it the foundation of an universal benevolence.

The supreme good of the Brachmans seems to center in the idea of plenty enjoyed in peace. They quit not the silence of their groves to join the tumults of the State, nor point the brand flaming from the altar against the battlements of the citadel. Their ideas of power are confined to their own little community: here they live in a state of subordination which knows no resistance, and slumber in a voluptuousness which knows no interruption.

But if the precepts and exhortations by which they obtain this affluent subsistence, recommended no other object but their own important persons to the consideration of charity, they would have all the world, excepting their bigots, for enemies; and these too might become undeceived, by the flagrancy of such interested commands.

Aware of this, the Brachmans have made their gods require; beside the necessity of endowing their temples, the practice of all other kinds of charities, by which the necessities of human nature may be relieved. A third part of the wealth of every Gentoo is expended upon such occasions. We see nowhere so numerous and such vast fabricks built for the service of religion: refectories built on the high road for the relief and lodging of passengers: spacious ponds dug for the ease of the labourer, and the convenience of the inhabitants: daily distribution of victuals given to the poor: — such effects concur to give us an idea of the charity of the Gentoos, not exceeded by that of the practice of Christians.

The Brachmans themselves profess great hospitality, and by this address preserve that extreme veneration, which otherwise would be lost through the effects of envy, in a detestation of their impositions.



**5. The ancient tradition of Brahman purity, William Macintosh<sup>11</sup>**

It appears, from the concurring testimony of ancient writers, that the Brahmins of India, about two thousand years ago, lived innocent, pure, and austere lives, abstaining from wine and animal food; and, as much as possible, from all sensual enjoyment. They...endeavoured to shelter their feeble virtue by retirement in caves and woods, where they subsisted on the productions of the earth.

**6. Great sway over community, George Forster<sup>12</sup>**

The Bramin was invested with the uncontrolled guardianship of religion; he became the perpetual medium, through which the inferior classes addressed their god: he was also, the sole depositary and instructor of science, and to his care and ability was intrusted the education of youth. The importance of these offices must have given to the Bramin great sway in a community where a knowledge of religious worship, from its complex variety, becomes a task of arduous labour; and where, at the same time, a performance of the rites of his religion, is deemed an obligation indispensably incumbent on the Hindoo, in his acquisition of future happiness. These employments were judged of sufficient magnitude to occupy the whole attention of the Bramin, and he was strictly interdicted from all temporal affairs. The authority of exercising the functions of royalty seems to have devolved without reserve on the Chittery or Rajah, and his possessions were held hereditary in the line of legitimate male primogeniture. The youngest branch of this race was employed in the army, and entrusted with the charge of the forts and strongholds of the country. The occupation of a merchant, with the transactions of traffic, was committed to the Bhyse; or Banian, and it was declared unlawful for the other tribes to engage in commerce. The husbandman, the artisan, the private soldier, and the labourer, compose the Looder, or the fourth cast of Hindoo; and each of these respective professions was exclusively pursued. Thus, distinctly arranged, and on the severest penalties prohibited from extraneous mixture, or the admission of proselytes, the Hindoo government acquired an uniformity and vigour, the natural result of its principles...

**7. Born to command, De Grandpre<sup>13</sup>**

Ever remember, they say to their children from their infancy, that you are born to command other men. This lesson is repeated every day, and contributes perhaps as much as anything else to generate in them the idea they entertain of their superiority over every other cast.

Be this at it may, the Bramins are in possession of eminent employments, great wealth, and unbounded esteem. They were probably indebted for this ascendancy at first to their physical powers and their arms, and they preserved



it by their virtues and understanding. The consideration they still enjoy rests on a similar foundation, the knowledge they possess. It is certainly from the opinion which is formed of their virtue and sagacity, that they are placed in the first rank; but this is a matter of opinion only, and the first revolution in principals may do away the supremacy. They have already lost their physical superiority: their cast, like all the human race, is fallen off from the vigour which the first men must have possessed; the consideration resulting from arms has gone from them to the Moors, by whom they have been conquered. If any thing can maintain them in their present elevated rank, it is their secret as to their primitive language, their mysteries, the books of their religion, the knowledge derived from them, and more than all, perhaps, the privilege of being immediately charged with the ceremonies of worship, the altars, and the gods.

## 8. Brahmins in Bengal, De Grandpre<sup>14</sup>

The trade of Bengal is in the hands of the *sircars*, who are there what the *dobiches* are on the coast. These *sircars* are Bramins, who lose no part of their dignity or importance by becoming merchants. They are known by a string of cotton, of seven threads, which they wear next their skin, in the manner of a scarf, from right to left, and are assisted by clerks, who have the privilege of composing a separate cast, and look upon themselves as a division of that of the Bramins, subordinate indeed to the truth itself, but superior to all other casts.

Bengal is at present the true country of the Bramins. Their names terminate almost always in *ram*; a distinction of honour answering nearly to the French *de*, the German *von*, or the *don* of the Spaniards, with this difference, that it follows the name instead of preceding it. The name of my *sircar* was Chissou; but, adding the final syllable of etiquette, he was called Chissouram. He was intelligent, honest, and, what is a very rare quality in a *sircar*, but little greedy after gain.

The ease with which these people learn any thing is wonderful: they all both speak and write the French, English, Portuguese, Moorish, Malabar, and their own sacred language; which last no one understands that does not belong to their cast. Some modern authors, and particularly the English, have made us acquainted with passages of their sacred books, their *Veidam* and their *Ezourveidam*; and in the national library at Paris is a translation of the *Cormovedam*. I respect the profound knowledge of these authors; I pretend not to call their honour in question; but would rather believe, since they affirm it, that the translations they give us are authentic, or at least that they think so themselves. I shall only remark, how much it is to be wished, that this sacred language of the Bramins were publicly known, that we may all be enabled to



profit by the light which must result from an acquaintance with the annals of so ancient and so learned a people. I am far from wishing to throw doubts upon such supposed books of theirs as have been made known to us: my opinion, besides, would have but little weight against authorities so great; yet it appears to me, that whoever has been personally acquainted with the Bramins, and has studied their character and prejudices, must be struck with the unusual marks of confidence which the communication of such passages implies, and the inferences to which such confidence would lead...

The Bramins still pursue their studies at Benares, a town which maintains its celebrity on account of the learned who live there. The nabob of this country has entirely lost his power, and is now merely the humble servant of the English company. But even were Benares to be laid low by some conquering arm, the Bramins, amidst the din of war, which they have abjured, would not abandon their studies. During all the revolutions which the Mogul Empire experienced, all the convulsions by which Bengal was distracted when invaded by Mahometanism, these people, unchanged in their pursuits, their virtues, the mildness of their manners, and the persuasion of the superiority of their morals and their descent, never failed to obtain the admiration even of their victorious enemies, who, submitting to the universal veneration which they saw paid to them, have acknowledged their own inferiority. Thus in a manner superior to the accidents of the world and the revolutions of states, they have maintained a supremacy over the minds of every nation. Without the empire gained by arms, they possess that of opinion; and, isolated in the middle of the world, they have triumphed over time itself. And yet, with so high a degree of glory, the result of so much patience and virtue, we must suppose they would sacrifice this to satisfy the importunate curiosity of a few travellers, totally unknown to them, who had come from the remotest regions of the earth to inquire into their mysteries; that in direct violation of the essential precepts of their religion, they would discard, in favour of these foreigners, a silence rendered sacred by a series of ages, and reveal secrets which were the foundation of a superiority preserved and transmitted by their ancestors from the earliest periods of the world. What an instance of the instability of human affairs!

## **9. Brahmins and political power, William Robertson<sup>15</sup>**

The monarchs of India...behold among their subjects an order of men far superior to themselves in dignity, and so conscious of their own pre-eminence, both in rank and in sanctity, that they would deem it degradation and pollution if they were to eat of the same food with their sovereign. Their persons are sacred, and even for the most heinous crimes they cannot be capitally punished; their blood must never be shed. To men in this exalted station monarchs must look up with respect, and reverence them as the ministers



of religion and the teachers of wisdom. On important occasions, it is the duty of sovereigns to consult them, and to be directed by their advice. Their admonitions, and even their censures, must be received with submissive respect. This right of the Brahmins to offer their opinion with respect to the administration of public affairs was not unknown to the ancients; and in some accounts preserved in India of the events which happened in their own country, princes are mentioned, who, having violated the privileges of the casts, and disregarded the remonstrances of the Brahmins, were deposed by their authority, and put to death.

While the sacred rights of the Brahmins opposed a barrier against the encroachments of regal power on the one hand, it was circumscribed on the other by the ideas which those who occupied the highest stations in society entertained of their own dignity and privileges. As none but the members of the cast next in rank to that which religion has rendered sacred, could be employed in any function of the state, the sovereigns of the extensive kingdoms anciently established in India, found it necessary to intrust them with the superintendence of the cities and provinces too remote to be under their own immediate inspection. In these stations they often acquired such wealth and influence, that offices conferred during pleasure, continued hereditarily in their families, and they came gradually to form an intermediate order between the sovereign and his subjects; and, by the vigilant jealousy with which they maintained their own dignity and privileges, they constrained their rulers to respect them, and to govern with moderation and equity.

### **10. Religious practices, William Robertson<sup>16</sup>**

The rites and ceremonies of their worship are pompous and splendid, and the performance of them not only mingles in all the more momentous transactions of common life, but constitutes an essential part of them. The Brahmins, who, as ministers of religion, preside in all its functions, are elevated above every other order of men, by an origin deemed not only more noble, but acknowledged to be sacred. They have established among themselves a regular hierarchy and gradation of ranks, which, by securing subordination in their own order, adds weight to their authority, and gives them a more absolute dominion over the minds of the people. This dominion they support by the command of the immense revenues with which the liberality of princes, and the zeal of pilgrims and devotees, have enriched their Pagodas...

The Brahmins being considered by the Mahomedan conquerors of India as the guardians of the national religion, have been so studiously depressed by their fanatical zeal, that the modern members of that order are as far inferior to their ancestors in science as in power. It is from the writings of their ancient Pundits that they derive the most liberal sentiments which they entertain at



present, and the wisdom for which they are now celebrated has been transmitted to them from ages very remote.

### **11. Brahmins of antiquity and of present times, Quintin Craufurd<sup>17</sup>**

If we compare the Brahmins of the present day with the Brachmanes of antiquity, we shall, in almost every feature of their character, perceive the strongest resemblance. The difference that may exist between them may partly have insensibly taken place in the lapse of time; but must chiefly be ascribed to the revolutions that have happened in their government.

The ancient Brahmins, living in an age when the Hindoo empire flourished, cultivated science with an encouragement of which their oppressed posterity are deprived. Beside the study of the sacred, moral, and metaphysical writings of their nation, a principal part of their scientific pursuits seems to have been directed to astronomy, natural philosophy, and some branches of mathematics....

They were held in so high repute for their maxims of morality, and for their knowledge in science and philosophy, that, besides Pythagoras, many went from Greece and other more eastern countries, purposely to be instructed by them....

But though the Brahmins now may be inferior to their ancestors, as philosophers and men of science, their cast is still the only repository of the literature that yet remains: to them alone is entrusted the education of youth; they are the sole interpreters of the law, and the only expounders of their religion.

### **12. Great deference shown to Brahmins, Rev. William Carey<sup>18</sup>**

The multitudes pay a thousandfold more deference to the Brahmins than the people did to the priests in the Papacy's darkest days. And all are bound to their present state by caste, in breaking whose chains a man must endure to be renounced and abhorred by his wife, children, and friends. Every tie that twines the heart of a husband, father, and neighbour must be torn and broken ere a man can give himself to Christ.

### **13. Influence of Brahmins, Rev. Joshua to his father in August 1800<sup>19</sup>**

The influence of the brahmins also is almost inconceivable to them who do not live within the light of it. They are Sacred, nay in some instances they are almost regarded as Deities. I have often seen people falling at their feet in the most profound reverence. If there are any who do not wish thus [to] respect them out of love, yet they stand in the greatest awe of them, not for their number, for perhaps they are not above a 20<sup>th</sup> part of the nation, nor indeed are they vested with any real power, but merely on account of their sanctity tho' perhaps there is not a sect of worse men in the Earth.



#### **14. Stages in the life of a Brahmin, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>20</sup>**

The Brahmin is the first of all created beings. The world, and all that is in it, belongs to him; by him all other mortals enjoy their life, because his curse can destroy kings; therefore, a Brahmin is to be treated with more respect than a king. His life and property are secured by the strictest laws in this world, and threats of the most dreadful punishments in the next. His youth must be passed in self-denial and chastisements, and devoted exclusively to the study of the Vedas: obedient, and serving his teacher, he is to beg his subsistence from door to door. In the second period of his life, we find him surrounded by his family and his children, performing the usual duties of a Brahmin, in reading and teaching the Vedas, sacrificing and praying, giving and receiving alms. He is not, however, permitted to accept any services; he is to renounce all the pleasures of life, such as music, singing, dancing, play, &c. and to shun worldly honours and enjoyments like poison. Even his external appearance and his dress are strictly prescribed. He is commanded to appear frank and modest, pure and chaste, without passion; his hair and beard cut, and his person cleanly, with a staff and the Vedas in his hand, and bright gold rings in his ears. If he has read the sacred books, brought up his son, and performed the holy sacrifices, he is allowed to confide every thing to his son, and to live in his house, as arbitrator. His third period of life is the most laborious. Clothed with the skin of a black antelope, or with leaves, with his hair hanging down, and his nails suffered to grow very long, he is to sleep out of doors, on the bare ground, without fire, to live only on fruits and roots, but to perform all religious duties with the greatest scrupulosity. Lastly, he concludes his life in self-contemplation, and, in meditations on his God, he is to breathe out his spirit, as the bird flies into the open air from the branch upon the tree...

#### **15. Bhumihar Brahmins in Banaras, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>21</sup>**

The Hindoo population is divided into four great classes; the Brahmins, the Kshatree or Rajahpoots, the Vaisyas, and the Sudras. There is also a fifth class, called Shankar Baran, to which the present Rajah of Benares belongs, who asserts that they are of the Bhumeehar Brahmins, i.e. of the Brahmins who cultivate the soil. They consider themselves the purest and most distinguished descendants of the highest Brahmins, but they, in fact, owe their origin to a Brahmin father and a Rajahpoot mother, and therefore cannot enter into a matrimonial alliance with the higher castes, of a wholly pure descent...

#### **16. First execution of a Brahmin by the British, Rev. James Long<sup>22</sup>**

To the North of Hastings' bridge lies *Kuli* (*Coolie*) bazaar, once occupied like many other places, by a handsome Musalman burial-ground, but which was pulled down to erect the present buildings. On a platform erected to the



south-west of it, Nandakumar, once Dewan to the Nawab of Murshidabad, was executed, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1775 – the first Brahman hanged by the English in India: his death excited as great a revulsion of feeling among natives as did the execution of Louis XVI among the French royalists. The foremost among the Mahapatak, crimes of the highest degree, or mortal sins of the Hindus, is killing a Brahman...Immediately after the execution, the Hindus rushed to the river to wash away the offence committed in seeing it, by bathing in Ganges water. During three days they ate nothing; and, subsequently, the excitement was very great; menaces were held out to the judges that if they proceeded to court, their lives would be sacrificed as victims to popular fury; but regardless of menaces, they marched in procession to the Supreme Court, attended by all the paraphernalia of justice, and the threats of the Hindus were as effective as those of the Calcutta Babus, on the passing of the *Lex Loci* Act. There is a native still living in Calcutta, whose father told him, that on that day the Hindus went to the other side of the river to eat, considering Calcutta to have been polluted by the execution of a Brahman.

### 17. Saraswat Brahmins in Sindh, Richard Burton<sup>23</sup>

The Sarsat or Sarsudh (properly Sariswatiya, as derived from the vicinity of the Saraswati River), belongs to the Panja-Gaur race. Of this tribe there are about forty pure families in Sindh; they abstain from all irregular practices, and call the rest of the caste Sindhur, because they allege the others were originally Numryo Belochies made Brahmans by Rama Chandra, who when in want of a priest, applied a tilak of vermillion to the Mlenchha's forehead. The Sarsat are supposed to have emigrated to Sindh about two centuries ago. They worship Mahes (Mahadeva or Shiva) and Bhawani his Sakti. The latter deity is known to them by many names and under a plurality of forms, as Devi, Durga, Kali, Parwati and Singhawani (the "rider of the lion"). She presides over most of the Hindoo sacred spots as Hinglaj, the Mekli Hills near Tatta, Dhara Tirth near Sehwan, &c., &c. The Sarsat abstains from certain impure meats, as beef and fowls: he eats fish, wild birds, onions and the flesh of the deer, kid and sheep, because ordered to do so by the Mountain Goddess in a time of famine. The meat is always bought, as the higher castes of Hindoos here as elsewhere will not kill animals themselves. Most of the Sarsat tribe drink wine and marry widows, though only those of the same caste. They shave the beard and wear the dress of a common Sahukar, namely, a white turban, Angarkha (long cotton coat), Dhoti (cloth round the waist instead of trowsers), Bochan (kerchief or shawl thrown over the shoulders), and cloth slippers: in the hand a Mala or rosary of sandal wood, with twenty-seven beads is usually carried. Sometimes a Sarsat will assume the dress of an Anil (revenue officer) whereas the Pokarna rarely, if ever, do. There are considerable numbers of the



Sarsat class, settled at Hyderabad and Sehwan. They seldom learn Persian, or enter into the service of Government: their principal occupations being the study of Sanscrit and the Gurumukhi writings. The Sarsat, having but a modicum of astrological learning, make up for their deficiency in that kind of imposture by rather a rude invention. Their peculiar mode of prediction is called "Nashkan Karanu:" it is done by fixing the mind upon any question proposed, at the same time inhalation is stopped, and the nostrils tightly pressed with the fingers. After due meditation, the issue of an event is pronounced upon *ex cathedra* and a fee duly claimed.

## C. KSHATRIYAS

### 1. Follow several professions, Alexander Dow<sup>24</sup>

The second in order is the Sitti tribe, who are sometimes distinguished by the name of Kittri or Koytri. They, according to their original institution, ought to be all military men; but they frequently follow other professions. Brihma is said to have produced the Kittri from his heart, as an emblem of that courage which warriors should possess.

### 2. Rajputs of the mountains, G.T. Vigne<sup>25</sup>

The Rajputs of the mountain states are known and distinguished by an appellation which has reference to their state, or the name of the founder of their family. Those of Mundi are called Mundial; the Chumyal of Chumba take their name from a distinguished Rajput; the Jumial are the Rajputs of Jumu; the Rajputs of the Bilaspur family are called Kyluri; those of Tira are denominated the Kutaj; and the Kulu or the family of Sultanpur, are called Kulu Rajputs, from the name of the country. The Mundi Rajahs always bear the surname of Seyn; those of Tira bear the name of Chund, or the Moon; and the Chumba and Jumu Rajahs are always Singhs, or Lions.

## D. VAISHYAS

### 1. Exceedingly crafty, Mrs. Nathaniel Kindersley<sup>26</sup>

The tribe of Hindoos the English have most connexion with, and are obliged to put most confidence in, are in the third great division, called *Banians*, who are a kind of merchants, or rather brokers in every kind of merchandize. Every European both civil and military, who has either trade, or troops under him to pay, is obliged to have one of them in his service, who is a sort of steward: one of them is likewise necessary at the head of every family, to hire



and pay the servants, and purchase whatever is wanting, for nothing can be bought or sold without them.

They are exceedingly indolent; crafty, and artful to an astonishing degree; and shew in all their dealings the most despicable low cunning, which makes them not to be depended upon for any thing: they have not only a secret premium out of whatever they pay to servants, trades people, &c. but keep them out of their money long after the master supposes they have been paid.

They are the most tedious people in the world, for besides the holidays, which they will on no account break through, they have a method of putting every thing off till to-morrow: when it is found out, as it often is, that they have told an untruth, they have no shame of it, but immediately tell another and another; nothing can hurry them, nothing can discompose or put them out of countenance, nothing can make them angry; provided their gains are sure, the master may fret to find his business go on slowly, may abuse them for want of honesty, may argue with them for their ingratitude, may convict them of falsehood and double-dealing, it signifies nothing; the same mild and placid countenance remains, without the least symptom of fear, anger, or shame.

Those who are concerned with us usually speak pretty tolerable English; they are many of them worth large sums of money, and frequently lend a great deal to their masters, mostly at the interest of nine or ten per cent.

By being in the service of an English gentlemen, particularly if he has any considerable rank or employment in the company's service, they have great advantages, not only from all his concerns, out of which they have a profit, but it enables them to carry on their own with the greater security; besides their wages, which, according to their master's situation and their own importance, is from a hundred to ten rupees a month, they are many of them of consequence amongst their own people, keep a *palenqueen*, horse, and a number of servants.

Those who act in that capacity to a Governor or Commander in Chief, pretend to a superior rank, and take the title of *Duan*, instead of *Banian*.

## 2. Mostly merchants, Alexander Dow<sup>27</sup>

The name of Beise or Bise is given to the third tribe. They are for the most part, merchants, bankers, and bunias or shop-keepers. These are figuratively said to have sprung from the belly of Brimha; the word Beish signifying a provider or nourisher.

## 3. Banias, Rev. James Long<sup>28</sup>

Banyan is a person either acting for himself or as the substitute of some great black merchants by whom the English gentlemen in general transact all their business. He is interpreter, head book-keeper, head secretary, head broker,



the supplier of cash, and cash-keeper, and in general also secret-keeper. He puts in the under-clerks, the porter or door-keeper, stewards, bearers of the silver, slaves, running footmen, torch and branch light-carriers, palanqueen-bearers, and all the long tribe of under servants, for whose honesty he is deemed answerable, and he conducts all the trade of his master, to whom, unless pretty well acquainted with the country languages, it is difficult for any of the natives to obtain access.... There is a powerful string of connections among these Banyans who serve all the English in the settlements of Bengal, as well in all public offices as in their private offices.

#### **4. Hindu bankers and money dealers at Shikarpur, Charles Masson<sup>29</sup>**

The city, renowned for its wealth, is particularly celebrated for its Hindu bankers and money dealers, whose connections are ramified throughout the countries of Central Asia, and of Western India. It is especially the home of these people, where their families are fixed, and where are detained those of gomastahs, or agents, located in foreign countries.

...As the existence of some great center of monetary transactions, in this part of the world, was always indispensable for the facilities of the commerce carried on in it, it is not unlikely, looking at the facts within our knowledge connected with the condition of the adjacent country during the last two centuries, that Multan preceded Shikarpur as the great money mart, and that from it the Hindus removed, converting the insignificant village of the chace into a city of the first rate and consequence.

### **E. SHUDRAS**

#### **1. Agriculturists, William Robertson<sup>30</sup>**

Nor were the benefits of these restraints upon the power of the sovereign confined wholly to the two superior orders in the state; they extended, in some degree, to the third class, employed in agriculture. The labours of that numerous and useful body of men are so essential to the preservation and happiness of society, that the greatest attention was paid to render their condition secure and comfortable. According to the ideas which prevailed among the natives of India (as we are informed by the first Europeans who visited their country), the sovereign is considered as the sole universal proprietor of all the land in his dominions, and from him is derived every species of tenure by which his subjects can hold it. These lands were let out to the farmers who cultivated them at a stipulated rent, amounting usually to a fourth part of their annual produce paid in kind. In a country where the price of work is extremely low, and where the labour of cultivation is very inconsiderable, the earth yielding



its productions almost spontaneously, where subsistence is amazingly cheap, where few clothes are needed, and houses are built and furnished at little expense, this rate cannot be deemed exorbitant or oppressive. As long as the husbandman continued to pay the established rent, he retained possession of the farm, which descended, like property, from father to son.

Under a form of government which paid such attention to all the different orders of which the society is composed, particularly the cultivators of the earth, it is not wonderful that the ancients should describe the Indians as a most happy race of men; and that the most intelligent modern observers should celebrate the equity, the humanity, and mildness of Indian policy.

## F. OUTCASTES

### 1. *Hircarers*; Mrs. Nathaniel Kindersley<sup>31</sup>

There are other *casts* who are remarkably swift of foot, particularly *Hircarers*; these people are often made use of as spies, both on public and private occasions; frequently they are kept as a sort of running-footmen, and compose a part of the parade of servants who precede a *palenqueen*; they are likewise sent with letters or messages to very different parts of the country and their expedition is extraordinary.

When one gives a *Hircarer* a letter to carry to any distance, he takes off his turband, and carefully conceals the letter in the folds of it; he provides himself with a brass pot, for the convenience of drawing water from the wells or rivers he is to pass; and a little parched rice, either in a bag or the folds of his garment, which is generally a piece of coarse linen, from his waist to his knees: thus equipped, with a sort of club in his hand, he will make a journey of three or four hundred miles.









## Women

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- A. The women of Hindustan
- B. Marriage
- C. Royal Ladies
- D. Women rulers
- E. Sati
- F. Courtesans

### **A. THE WOMEN OF HINDUSTAN**

#### **1. The fairer sex, Robert Orme<sup>1</sup>**

Nature seems to have showered beauty on their fairer sex throughout Indostan, with a more lavish hand than in most other countries. They are all, without exception, fit to be married before thirteen, and wrinkled before thirty – flowers of too short a duration not to be delicate; and too delicate to last long. Segregated from the company of the other sex, and strangers to the ideas of attracting attention, they are only the handsomer for this ignorance; as we see in them; beauty in the noble simplicity of nature. Hints have already been given of their physiognomy: their skins are of a polish and softness beyond that of all their rivals on the globe: a statuary would not succeed better in Greece itself, in his pursuit of the Grecian form; and although in the men he would find nothing to furnish the ideas of the Farnesian Hercules, he would find in the women the finest hints of the Medicean Venus.

#### **2. A female of Hindostan hath few equals, George Forster<sup>2</sup>**

In the exercise of the tongue, a female of Hindostan hath few equals; and if she hath ever followed a camp, I would pronounce her invincible on any ground in Europe. An English woman, educated at our most noted seminaries, and skilled in all the various compass of debate, will, perhaps, on



some interesting occasion, maintain the contest for an hour, which then terminates in blows and victory. But an Indian dame, improved by a few campaigns, has been known to wage a colloquial war, without introducing one manual effort, for the space of three successive days; sleeping and eating at reasonable intervals. There is a fertility of imagination, a power of expression, inherent in the mind, and vocal ability, of an Asiatic, particularly a female one, which cannot be engendered in the cold head of an European: and there is an extent of language also peculiar to the East, which the limits of Western speech do not contain.

### **3. More privileged than any in Asia, Abbe J. A. Dubois<sup>3</sup>**

...it may be said, with truth, that...the Hindoo females...lie under much less restraint, enjoy more real freedom, and are in possession of more enviable privileges than the persons of their sex in any other Asiatic country. In fact, to them belong the entire management of their household, the care of their children, the superintendence of the menial servants, the distribution of alms and charities. To their charge are generally intrusted the money, jewels, and other valuables. To them belongs the care of procuring provisions, and providing for all expenses. It is they also who are charged, almost to the exclusion of their husbands, with the most important affair of procuring wives for their sons, and husbands for their daughters, and, in doing this, they evince a niceness, an attention, and foresight which are not certainly surpassed in any country; while in the management of their domestic business, they in general show a shrewdness, a saving-ness, and an intelligence which would do honour to the best housewives in Europe.

In the mean while, the austerity and roughness with which they are outwardly treated in public, by their husbands, is rather a matter of form, and entirely ceases when the husband and his wife are in private. It is then that the Hindoo females assume all that empire which is everywhere exercised in civilised countries, by the persons of their sex over the male part of creation; find means to bring them under their subjection, and rule over them, in several instances, with a despotic sway. In short, although outwardly exposed in public to the forbidding and repulsive frowns of an austere husband, they can be considered in no other light than as perfectly the mistresses within the house.

The influence of the Hindoo females on the welfare of families is so well known, that the successes or misfortunes of the Hindoos are almost entirely attributed to their good or bad management. When a person prospers in the world, it is customary to say that he has the happiness to possess an intelligent wife, to whom he is indebted for his welfare; and when any one runs to ruin, it is the custom to say that he has for his partner a bad wife, to whom his misfortunes must chiefly be attributed. In short, a good-natured and intelligent



wife is considered by all castes of natives, as the most valuable of all the blessings which could be bestowed on a family and a bad one as the most dreaded of all curses; so great is their influence on the fate of the Hindoo households.

The authority of married women within their houses is chiefly exerted in preserving good order and peace among the persons who compose their families; and a great many among them discharge this important duty with a prudence and a discretion which have scarcely a parallel in Europe. I have known families composed of between thirty and forty persons, or more, consisting of grown sons and daughters, all married and all having children, living together under the superintendence of an old matron – their mother or mother-in-law. The latter, by good management, and by accommodating herself to the temper of her daughters-in-law; by using, according to circumstances, firmness or forbearance, succeeded in preserving peace and harmony during many years amongst so many females, who had all jarring interests, and still more jarring tempers. I ask you whether it would be possible to attain the same end, in the same circumstances, in our countries; where it is scarcely possibly to make two women living under the same roof to agree together.

It is true that the same spirit of concord between an old Hindoo matron and her daughters on one side, and her daughters-in-law on the other, does not prevail in an equal degree in all households; but instances of such union and harmony are by no means uncommon, and they last to the death of their parents; when, ordinarily, the brothers divide the heritage, separate with their several families, and each one shifts for himself.

...it is a weakness common to all nations, and from which the Hindoos are not exempt, to hail with more exultation the birth of a male than that of a female, and Hindoo parents are in a greater degree under the influence of these feelings, because they derive more support from a son than from a daughter; but it is untrue that a female is despised and spurned by her parents as soon as born. Parents, chiefly mothers, foster their children, both males and females, with an equal tenderness. So far from females being despised while living under the paternal roof, their parents and brothers are often seen submitting themselves to severe privations for the purpose of procuring trinkets and jewels for their daughters or sisters, in order that they may be able to appear in public with decency and advantage, while the males are seen in rags or half naked, and live forgotten at home.

The principal care of parents is to procure suitable establishments for their daughters, over whom mothers continue to exercise a kind of paramount authority, even after their marriage, being particularly attentive to check that despotic sway which so many mothers-in-law are but too well disposed to exercise over their daughters-in-law...



#### 4. Influence of Hindu women seen in history, Anna Harriette Leonowens<sup>4</sup>

There is a marked difference between the moral and social character of the Hindoo and the Mohammedan women of India. The Hindoo woman does not occupy that position in society which she is so eminently fitted to grace, and which is accorded to women in Europe and America; but she is by no means so degraded as is so frequently represented by travellers, who are apt to mistake the common street-woman with whom they are brought into contact for the wife and mother of an ordinary Hindoo home. It is difficult for a stranger to find out what an Indian woman is at home, though he may have encountered many a bedizened female in the streets which he takes for her.

The influence of the Hindoo woman is seen and felt all through the history of India, and is very marked in the annals of British rule. Though the political changes, the invasion, and despotism of Mohammedan rule may have forced upon them the seclusion now so general, it is evident that they once occupied a very different position in society, from the testimony of their earliest writers and the dramatic representations of domestic life and manners still extant.

One of the most startling facts is, that among the Asiatic rules of India who have heroically resisted foreign invasion the women of Hindostan have distinguished themselves almost as much as the men. Lakshmi Baiee, the queen of Jahnsee, held the entire British army in check for the space of twenty-four hours by her wonderful generalship, and she would probably have come off victorious if she had not been shot down by the enemy. After the battle Sir Hugh Rose, the English commander, declared that the best *man* on the enemy's side was the brave queen Lakshmi Baiee. Another courageous and noble woman, Aus Khood, was placed by the British government on the throne of Pattiala, an utterly disorganized and revolted state in the Panjaub. In less than one year she had by her wise and effective administration changed the whole condition of the country, subjugated the rebellious cities and villages, increased the revenues, and established order, security and peace everywhere. Alleah Baiee, the Mahratta queen of Malwah, devoted herself for the space of twenty years with unremitting assiduity to the happiness and welfare of her people, so that Hindoos, Buddhists, Jains, Parsees, and Mohammedans united in blessing her beneficent rule; and of so rare a modesty was this woman that she ordered a book which extolled her virtues to be destroyed, saying, 'Could I have been so infamous as to neglect the welfare and happiness of my subjects?'



## B. MARRIAGE

### 1. Married early, Alexander Dow<sup>5</sup>

Between the age of seven and ten, the children are, by their parents, given away in marriage. The young pair are brought together, in order to contract an intimacy with one another. But when they approach the years of puberty, they carefully separate them, till the female produces signs of womanhood. She then is taken from her parents to cohabit with her husband: nor is she ever after permitted to visit them. It is not lawful among the Hindoos to marry nearer than the eighth degree to kindred. Polygamy is permitted, but seldom practiced; for they very rationally think, that one wife is sufficient for one man.

### 2. Marriage indispensable duty of parents, George Forster<sup>6</sup>

Amongst the Hindoos, marriage, when it can be performed with any degree of conveniency, is deemed an indispensable duty, and it is believed, that propagating the species in that state, entitles parents to singular marks of the Divine favour...By the ancient laws of the country, the wife depends for the enjoyment of every pleasure, as well as for most of the ordinary accommodations of life, on the immediate existence of her husband; and it becomes her invariable interest to preserve his health, as much of her happiness is centered in his living to an old age. On the demise of the husband, the wife virtually devolves into a *caput mortuum*; she is not permitted to marry again, she is de-prived of all consequence in the family, and divested of the marks of ornament and distinction. There are certain religious ceremonies not law-ful for her to perform, and in some instance, she is held unclean; but on all occasions, after the husband's death, the widow is classed in the house as a slave or a menial servant. – But this usage has not so generally prevailed in later times.

### 3. Honour of the family, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>7</sup>

In Maharatta, woman is considered the honour of the family: she is the life and soul of her husband, his second self, his best friend, and the source of all his happiness. Woman, with her amiable converse, is the companion of man's solitude, and his comfort, in the journey through the desert of life. According to the laws of Menu, women are to be esteemed and honoured by their fathers, brothers, and husbands, that they may themselves be happy, for the gods rejoice when honour is paid to women.

Girls are generally married in the eighth and boys in the tenth year of their age: the father choosing for his children; but if he has neglected this duty for three years after his daughter has attained that age, she is at liberty



to choose for herself. Among the higher castes, the marriage is celebrated with many ceremonies; but in the lower castes, the hands of the bride and the bridegroom are merely united by a blade of sacred grass. When the daughter of a warrior marries a Brahmin, she holds an arrow in her hand; the daughter of a Visya (the caste of merchants) holds a whip; and the daughter of a Shoodra (caste of shopkeepers) lays hold of the border of a mantle. As soon as the bride has advanced seven steps to meet the bridegroom, and they have both repeated a certain appointed text or sentence, the union is indissoluble at the seventh step. If the young husband dies before he has lived with his wife, she remains a widow for her whole life; at least the Hindoos of a higher caste hesitate to marry a woman who became a widow in her childhood.

The daughters of two rich merchants at Calcutta had lately been placed in this melancholy situation, and I was assured that the fathers had assigned them a large dowry to obtain husbands for them.

The bridegroom proceeds with great pomp to the house of the bride, where he is received with much festivity, accompanied by music and dancing; the apartments are brilliantly lighted up, and adorned with flowers, and a cow is brought in apparently for sacrifice, but the bridegroom begs her life, and at his request she is set at liberty. When the father of the bridegroom is a person of distinction, he generally takes the bride to his own house, and has her educated under his own protection, especially if her parents are not in good circumstances. A separate building is erected for the brides of princes, and their parents who come from another country. As soon as the ceremonies and the festivities are over, the youthful husband returns home, or the father of the bride takes her away with him: and when she is of age to marry, she is fetched by her husband with much ceremony.

Persons of distinction, on these occasions lead the procession mounted on richly adorned elephants: the servants follow, in their best attire, surrounded by musicians, some carrying branches of palm, flowers, painted paper lanterns, &c.; and the bridegroom, handsomely dressed, accompanied by his relations, riding on an elephant, a horse, or in a Takt-i-rawan, closes the pageant. Ornaments of all kinds, often to the value of several thousand rupees, are the first and principal gifts which he offers to his bride; for the Hindoo is commanded by his religion constantly to provide his wife with trinkets and handsome clothes, that she may remember his affection and find amusement in her solitude.

### **Marriage indissoluble**

As the marriage is to be indissoluble, and he is not permitted, except under certain circumstances, to take a second wife, it seems worthy of notice, that he may legally separate from his wife if they have no children



within eight years, or no daughters in eleven years. On the other hand, the wife is obliged to wait for her husband eight years, if he has left her for religious purposes; six years, if desire of wisdom or of glory have called him into the world; and three years, if he pursuit of pleasure is the cause of his absence.

## C. ROYAL LADIES

### 1. The Maratha Camp, Fanny Parkes<sup>8</sup>

APRIL 6TH 1835 – I arrived at Fatehgar... Having seen Musulman ladies followers of the Prophet, how great was my delight at finding native ladies were, at Fatehgar, worshippers of Ganesh and Krishna-ji!

Her Highness the Baiza Bai, the widow of the late Maharaj Daolut Rao Scindia, was in camp at this place under the care of Captain Ross. Daolut Rao, the adopted son and grandnephew of Mahadajee Scindia, contested with the Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, the memorable field of Assaye. On the death of Scindia, by his appointment the Baiza Bai, having become Queen of Gwalior, ruled the kingdom for nine years. Having no male issue, her Highness adopted a youth, called Jankee Rao, a distant relative of Scindia's, who was to be placed on the *masnad* at her decease.

A Rajpoot is of age at eighteen years: but when Jankee Rao, was only fourteen years old, the subjects of the Bai revolted and placed the boy at the head of the rebellion. Had her Highness remained at Gwalior she would have been murdered; she was forced to fly to Fatehgar, where she put herself under the protection of the Government. Her daughter, the Chimna Raja Sahib, a lady celebrated for her beauty and the wife of Appa Sahib, a Mahratta nobleman, died of fever brought on by exposure and anxiety at the time she fled from Gwalior, during the rebellion. It is remarkable that the ladies in this family take the title of Raja, to which Sahib is generally affixed. Appa Sahib joined the Baiza Bai, fled with her, and is now in her camp at Fatehgar. The rebellion of her subjects, and her Highness being forced to fly the kingdom, were nothing to the Bai in comparison to the grief occasioned her by the loss of her beloved daughter, the Chimna Raja.

Her granddaughter, the Gaja Raja Sahib, is also living with her; she has been married two years but is alone, her husband having deserted her to join the stronger party.

The Bai, although nominally free, is in fact a prisoner; she is extremely anxious to return to Gwalior, but is prevented by the refusal of the Government to allow her to do so; this renders her very unhappy.

April 8<sup>th</sup> – The Brijia Bai, one of her ladies, called to invite the lady with



whom I am staying to visit the Maharaj in camp; and gave me an invitation to accompany her...

We found her Highness seated on her *gaddi* of embroidered cloth, with her granddaughter the Gaja Raja Sahib at her side; the ladies, her attendants, were standing around her; and the sword of Scindia was on the *gaddi*, at her feet. She rose to receive and embrace us, and desired us to be seated near her. The Baiza Bai is rather an old woman, with grey hair, and *en bon point*; she must have been pretty in her youth; her smile is remarkably sweet, and her manners particularly pleasing; her hands and feet are very small and beautifully formed. Her sweet voice reminded me of the proverb, 'A pleasant voice brings a snake out of a hole.' She was dressed in the plainest red silk, wore no ornaments with the exception of a pair of small plain bars of gold as bracelets. Being a widow, she is obliged to put jewellery aside and to submit to numerous privations and hardships. Her countenance is very mild and open; there is a freedom and independence in her air that I greatly admire – so unlike that of the sleeping, languid, opium-eating Musulmans. Her granddaughter; the Gaja Raja Sahib; is very young; her eyes the largest I ever saw; her face is rather flat and not pretty; her figure is beautiful; she is the least little wee creature you ever beheld....

The Gaja Raja was dressed in purple Benares silk, with a deep gold border woven into it; when she walked she looked very graceful and the dress very elegant; on her forehead was a mark like a spearhead, in red paint; her hair was plaited and bound into a knot at the back of her head, and low down; her eyes were edged with *surma*, and her hands and feet dyed with *hinna*. On her feet and ankles were curious silver ornaments; toe-rings of peculiar form; which she sometimes wore of gold, sometimes of red coral. In her nostril was a very large and brilliant *n'hut*, of diamonds, pearls, and precious stones, of the particular shape worn by the Mahrattas; in her ears were fine brilliants. From her throat to her waist she was covered with strings of magnificent pearls and jewels; her hands and arms were ornamented with the same. She spoke but little – scarcely five words passed her lips; she appeared timid, but was pleased with the bouquet of beautiful flowers, just fresh from the garden, that the lady who presented me laid at her feet on her entrance. These Mahrattas are a fine bold race; amongst her ladies-in-waiting I remarked several fine figures, but their faces were generally too flat. Some of them stood in waiting with rich cashmere shawls thrown over their shoulders; one lady, before the Maharaj, leaned on her sword, and if the Bai quitted the apartment, the attendant and sword always followed her. The Bai was speaking of horses, and the lady who introduced me said I was as fond of horses as a Mahratta. Her Highness said she should like to see an English lady on horseback; she could not comprehend how they could sit all crooked, all on one side, in the side-saddle. I said I



should be too happy to ride into camp any hour her Highness would appoint, and show her the style of horsemanship practised by ladies in England. The Maharaj expressed a wish that I should be at the Mahratta camp at four o'clock, in two days time. *Atr*; in a silver filigree vessel, was then presented to the Gaja Raja; she took a portion up in a little spoon and put it on our hands. One of the attendants presented us with *pan*, whilst another sprinkled us most copiously with rose water: the more you inundate your visitor with rose-water, the greater the compliment.

This being the signal for departure, we rose, made our *bahut bahut adab salam*, and departed, highly gratified with our visit to her Highness the ex-Queen of Gwalior.

## 2. Ranjit Singh's Amazons, W.G. Osborne<sup>9</sup>

In the evening, a detachment of the Amazons arrived with music and fireworks. The establishment of this corps was one of Runjeet Sing's capricious whims... There were originally about one hundred and fifty of these fair warriors, who were selected from the prettiest girls from Cachemire, Persia, and the Punjab. They were magnificently dressed, armed with bows and arrows, and used frequently to appear on horseback, mounted *en cavalier*, for the amusement of the Maharajah. They are allowed a small sum daily for subsistence, and there are few of them who have not succeeded in obtaining grants of small villages from Runjeet Sing, the rents of which they receive – and many contrive to realize a considerable sum of money. The Lotus told me she was the owner of seven good villages, received at different times from Runjeet as marks of his favour. During our visit to Lahore, a considerable degree of excitement prevailed amongst this fairer portion of the Sikh army, owing to a report having arisen that the Maharajah intended to follow the example of the Company, and resume all grants for which no formal title deeds could be produced; the report, however, proved to be premature; and I believe Runjeet would sooner face Dost Mahommed and his Afghans, than a single individual of his Amazonian body-guard.

Some of the detachment who attend this evening, though not more than twelve years of age, were very handsome, and their dancing is the first I have seen in this country that has a shade of anything approaching to graceful in it, – one dance by the young Cachemirian girls, with single-sticks in their hands, particularly so; the clatter of the sticks, as they met in the mimic combat, keeping time to slow and graceful movement of their feet, had the effect of castanets, and was altogether both pretty and singular.

## 3. Meetings with the wives of Ranjit Singh, Fanny Eden<sup>10</sup>

We have been today to the Palace to see a select number of Mrs. Runjeets.



The entrance to the Palace is very fine. George went over there before us, and in a small inner court in a small room we found him and Runjeet at a private durbar, Runjeet very feeble and looking very ill. There is a piece of water with fountains and a little palace in the middle of it for Runjeet's ducks, which now and then come at a waddle over the Cachemire carpets.

We went in there for five minutes. Then we were led off by Kurruck Singh, the eldest son, and Heera Singh, the favourite, to the ladies' apartment. They went in a wretched little room with a high wall before it. Two of the ayahs met us at the door and smeared us with attar, to the utter destruction of my bonnet and gown. They were all young, one of them really beautiful and very fair, the others very humdrum, the principal one a monster of fat. They had enormous nose-rings, their foreheads almost hid with jewels, silver gauze veils, tinselly tunics and very tight trousers.

Kurruck Singh informed us three times that *his* mother was dead, and Heera Singh said there were many more wives in the other rooms – these were all lawfully married. They asked a great many childish questions, and laughed violently when they took courage to look at us. We could not make out what their amusements are. I fancy they sleep away a great deal of their time. It does strike me, every time I see them, that their lives must be quite unbearable.

#### **4. Mrs. Sher Singh, Fanny Eden<sup>11</sup>**

After church today we went to pay a visit to Mrs. Sher Singh, much the most interesting native visit we have paid in that line. She has come from some distance to meet us. She could not come to our tents, they are too open, but Sher Singh had one pitched near us. We were received with great state, a salute fired, all his household troops drawn up in their splendid dresses and Cachemire carpets covering the entire enclosure. The tent was very large, made of scarlet shawls. We left Major Wade and the aide-de-camps in the outer room. Sher Singh and little Pertuab took us into the inner one, which was very like an English drawing room – eight large glass windows, table covered with all kinds of bijouterie, for he gives large commissions to the French officers. The table covers of different coloured velvets embroidered with gold. Upon a large table an immense silver dinner service was put out, another was covered with perfumes and musical boxes of every size and shape.

His two ranees came in followed by Pertuab's old nurse. His mother is really beautiful; very little, very fair, with enormous black eyes and a pretty, clever expression. The other one's nose-ring was so enormous and had such large fringes of jewels hanging from it, it covered her mouth and half her face. They both talked merrily, and except that they stood up whenever Sher Singh moved, did not sound in awe of him; and both seemed equally fond of



Pertuab, who shewed off all the English he had picked up. They made a very pretty picture of an eastern family. Sher Singh had made himself more magnificent even than usual, and his dress is always studied and graceful. He always wears what is called here the Choga – a shawl pelisse very loose and thick, embroidered with gold and silver.

The women were quite unlike any others we have seen, so coaxing in manner to us. I am always curious to know what they do to amuse themselves, but it is impossible to find out. They gave us I do not know how many trays of shawls and jewels, and we must borrow some of them to wear tonight when Sher Singh comes to dinner.

### 5. Royal ladies at Jaunpur, Honoria Lawrence<sup>12</sup>

I wished to visit the ladies, and after some delay I was admitted to see the Rajah's wife, his two daughters, and the wife of his youngest son. One was a very beautiful girl of thirteen. She was tall and slender, with delicate features and large soft black eyes. She wore a petticoat of dark blue gauze, flowered with silver, and a rose coloured mantle round her head and shoulders. She was disfigured by the horrid nose-ring; and her feet and ankles, hands and arms were perfectly loaded with jewels. On each finger a ring, and from each ring a string of jewels passing down the back of the hand and joining a band of jewels round the wrist, the same sort of ornaments on the feet. A treble string of jewels round the head, with pendants that hung over the forehead. All the ladies were dressed in the same way, differing only in colours. The old lady wore on her thumb a ring, in which was set instead of a stone a looking glass about the size of a half-crown and into this she very often peeped.

I was amused to see that as the completion of their finery each had a printed cotton pocket-handkerchief such as would cost about sixpence at home, and these they waved about as if wishing they should attract special attention.

The lad who spoke English accompanied me as my guide and interpreter. I entered a large room where the Ranee was seated on a couch. The girls stood round her, and there were several attendants, men and women, standing by. The old lady rose when I came in, bowed and touched her forehead with her hand. I courtsied and she took my hand and seated me beside her. They all examined my dress, seemed much amused at it, asked if I always wore gloves, if all English ladies wore combs in their hair. How old I was, how long since I left England, whether I had ever been married before, what my husband's occupation was? I asked to see their jewels, and they led me to another room, where servants brought several boxes to the lady. She seemed much delighted to show her finery and truly it was amusing to see strings of pearls and gold chains tied up in little pieces of dirty rag, and huddled together in a box secured by a clumsy padlock. The Rajah himself joined us here, and told me one



necklace had cost 50,000 rupees. A pair of bracelets 500, and so on. The pearls were the largest I ever saw, and the gold chains the most massive. The other jewels were chiefly rubies, very large garnets, emeralds, and diamonds. The latter were I fancy of an inferior quality, at any rate, being not cut regularly but merely rounded, they had little brilliancy.

I must have seen twenty or thirty necklaces, as many head-bands, bracelets etc, and I could not help sighing when I thought what villages must have been plundered to supply all this finery. At last I rose to go and after many *safaams* and courtesies got away.

It struck me that this noble family had a remarkably plebeian look, and we afterwards found that they were mere parvenus. The present Rajah's father having done service to Government by bringing in a prisoner on whom a price had been set, was rewarded by the title.

## **6. The Ranis of Satara, Amelia Cary Falkland<sup>13</sup>**

Besides the two adopted boys, the raja left three widows, to whom I have already alluded, as making a yearly pilgrimage to Pertabguhr, when with hundreds in their train, they encamped on the hills, where they remained some time, and never failed to visit the governor, if he happened to be there. On the first of these occasions, as our cottage was on rising ground, we could see the approach of the ranees [of the Raja of Satara, whose territories had been declared lapsed by the British], and their numerous retinue at a distance, as they wound their way up the hill. It looked like a procession on the stage. There were flags flying, banners streaming, prancing horses, stately elephants, tall camels with their heads towering over everything; soldiers on foot; tom-toms and discordant horns, becoming louder every minute. Then as the ranees came near, we saw *maids of honour* running by the side of the closed palanquins in which the princesses were, and as one arrived at the entrance of the bungalow, crowds of attendants rushed on, and pressed round the palanquin screaming out their mistresses' titles. In the background were the elephants waving their trunks over the crowd, horses rearing and neighing, and a band of native musicians straining their lungs in blowing wind instruments, and nearly breaking their arms in beating the drums. Arrived at the door, the poor ladies were still kept shut up, till a wall of red cloth could be held up on each side of the entrance to prevent their being exposed to the vulgar gaze of mankind. When all was ready, they crept out of the palanquins, and were received by the governor. They were concealed in splendid sarees, which covered them from head to foot – not even the tip of a finger was visible. They were conducted, one by one, into an inner room, and to sofas, by the governor...

A few days after, I visited these royal dames, and had an opportunity of



seeing them unveiled.

Their camp covered a considerable space of ground near a tank, to which the elephants went to bathe every evening. From a distance the scene was imposing; on nearer inspection it was little else but a gigantic gipsy camp – not, however, the less picturesque for that.

There were tents of all shades of red, and brown, and blue, and *dirty* white. Hundreds of the followers of the ranees were busy with elephants or camels; all the animals were picketed about. Many people were cooking – all occupations being carried on in the open air.

The tents of the three ladies were inclosed within walls of canvas, painted red at the top...

As I was unaccompanied by any gentlemen, the ranees met me inside unveiled. They had on velvet jackets, the usual saree, worn by all Hindoo women (which is of such a length as to serve for petticoat and head-veil in one), and wore quantities of jewels, besides toe-rings! Over the back of the sofas were thrown handsome sarees, embroidered in gold, near at hand, and ready to be put on instantly, should any strange man enter suddenly.

The time I could see the ladies, although the tent was dark...

In the tent were also about twenty men, relations of the ranees, and before whom they could unveil. The father of the elder widow sat in a chair; her mother stood. I inquired the cause. It was because her husband was there, and wives in India do not sit in the presence of their husbands. However, a chair was given her behind the maids of honour, so that her husband could not see her when she sat down. Presently, a very aged and ugly woman crept out of a corner; she also was a relative of her highness, and looked as if she had just risen from the lower world, where 'Yama,' judge of departed souls, resides.

The interpreter was a Portuguese woman, who translated the no doubt high-flown eastern speeches of the ranees, into very plain, simple English. The woman said to me, 'Her highness say, she hopes master and misses will take care of her, and give her bread to eat, for else "she will have none."'

This meant neither more nor less than that her highness was not contented with the pension given her by the E.I. Company, but which was, in fact, I understand from those competent to judge, an ample one. When the conversation flagged, the ranee's jewels were brought on silver trays for me to look at. Then her copy-book was shown, for she had just begun to read and write; and one little child recited a Sanscrit prayer, and having finished it, began over again, and was with difficulty silenced.

During all the time I was in the tent, a natch girl was going through different movements with her feet and hands, for dancing it cannot be called in any sense of the word...



The visit was now drawing to a close; sweetmeats were laid at my feet in silver dishes, jessamine chains put around my neck, and after the usual offerings of betel-nut and paun, the sprinkling of the pocket-handkerchief with rose-water took place. I then took leave of the three widows, and was not sorry all was over.

## D. WOMEN RULERS

### 1. The Rani of the Kalour territory, George Forster<sup>14</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup>, at Bellaspour – twelve cosses, the residence of the Ranee or female ruler of the Kalour territory. This town stands on the south-east side of the Setlound or Sutludge, the most easterly of the five rivers, from which the name of Punjab is given to the tract of country extending from Sirhend to the Indus...

On my arrival at Bellaspour, I found the Ranee engaged in a war with the chief of Kangrah, on the limits of whose country her army was then encamped. It may not edify or perhaps entertain you to know the cause of this fell dispute, which however had taken such possession of the minds of the mountaineers, and to them was so important an event, that they seemed to think the hills and forests of Bellaspour the seat of universal war. The siege of Troy, and the conflicts on the Scamander, would have appeared as mere skirmishes to these sylvan heroes; and they probably would have allowed no other degree of comparison, than that women were the cause of them both. But as I myself became involuntarily interested in their story, and having little other matter to communicate, I am induced to intrude a sketch of it on your patience.

To deduce this eventful matter *ab ovo*, I must call your attention to the days of Acbar, who is said to have been the first Mahometan prince who reduced the northern mountains of Hindostan to the obedience of the empire. Towards the northern limit of Kalour, is a strong hold on an eminence, called the Kote Kangrah, the reduction of which detained Acbar, who commanded the expedition in person, a whole year, according to the tradition of this quarter. To reward one of his officers who had signalized himself in this service, he bestowed on him the captured fort, with a considerable space of adjacent territory. The descendants of this chief, who are of the Sheah's sect of Mahometans, continued in the possession until the present period, when the Rajah of Kangrah, on some pretence, laid the districts waste, and besieged the fort. Unable himself to repel the enemy, the Mahometan solicited the aid of the Bellaspour Ranee, who, with the spirit of a heroine, afforded speedy and vigorous succour to her neighbour, whose cause she has already revenged by



plundering and destroying almost every village of Kangrah; the chief of which now vainly asserts, that the Ranee, seeing his country destitute of defence, seized, under the colour of assisting her ally, the occasion of augmenting her own power.

### Nourpour 1783

On the 25th, in the Bellaspour army – ten cosses. It will not demand the pen of Homer to describe the different powers which formed this camp; their strength, the names and characters of their leaders, or the situation of the ground which they occupied: suffice it to say, that about 300 horses, and 8000 foot-men armed with match-locks, swords, spears, and clubs, were huddled together on two sides of a hill, in a deep state of confusion and filth. Having resided for the space of four months in this spot under small sheds made of the boughs of trees, you will naturally suppose, that the effects resulting from the situation could neither have been pleasant or salutary. In all, were four very ordinary tents, one of which was occupied by the generalissimo, a brother, and I believe an elder one, of the late chief of Bellaspour; for the order of succession in the line of primogeniture, is not at this day strictly adhered to in India, either amongst the Hindoos, or Mahometans. This personage, from age, being incapable of performing any active duty, had appointed a younger brother to the executive command. The Ranee, with her son, a youth of about ten years of age, and a favourite Sunnassee, had retired during the war to an adjacent fort, where she directed the general operation of the war.

Having entered thus far into the history of Bellaspour, I will proceed to explain some parts of the story of this lady, which, as they tend to place female conduct in a distinguished point of view, I embrace the occasion with pleasure...

I am to inform you that the Bellaspour Ranee, on the death of the late chief, which happened about three or four years ago, declared herself the guardian of her son, and regent of the country. She was opposed in this purpose by her husband's brother, the person who now commands the army; and she had also to combat the many difficulties incident in this country to her sex, the most embarrassing of which was a preclusion from public appearance; yet, baffling every attempt made to subvert her authority, she firmly established herself in the government. The event of the Ranee's success, brought on the confinement of her competitor; but after a short time, during which he experienced a lenient treatment, he was released. This dame of spirit, who hath evinced strong traits of a disposition fitted for conducting either military or civil schemes, and who hath hitherto been fortunate in them, is at this day enthralled by the force of love. Whether this passion is



to be classed amongst the alloys of our virtues, according to the doctrine of the most rigid moralists or whether it heightens the lustre of those already possessed, and even creates good qualities in us, as the elegant Yorick has advanced, are questions submitted, with a due deference to the intricacy of the subject, to those who are skilled in the extensive passion of love. The object of this lady's favour I saw, and the choice she has made is a proof of good taste. He is a young handsome Hindoo of a religious tribe, who, contrary to the usage of his sect, which is founded on rules almost as severe as those of the Carthusians, dresses gayly, and in the Mahometan fashion. From a certain levity, though politeness of manners, set off by the delicate fancy of his apparel, you at the first glance pronounce him a favourite of the women. Such are the changes which love can produce, even amongst a people who observe their religious ordinances with a scrupulousness irreconcilable to common sense, and which in some instances border on gross absurdity. Thus much for the Ranee of Bellaspour, to whom be all success!

## E. SATI

### 1. Sati at Kasimbazaar, John Z. Holwell<sup>15</sup>

It will not we hope be unacceptable, if we present our readers with an instance of the latter, which happened some years past at the East India Company's factory at Cossimbazaar in the time of Sir Francis Russell's chiefship, the author, and several other gentlemen of the factory were present, some of whom are now living: from a narrative, which the author then transmitted to England he is now enabled to give the particulars of this most remarkable proof of female fortitude, and constancy.

"At five of the clock on the morning of the 4th of February, 1742-3, died Rhaam Chund Pundit of the Mahahrattor [presumably Maratha] tribe, aged twenty-eight years; his widow (for he had but one wife) aged between seventeen and eighteen, as soon as he expired, disdaining to wait the term allowed her for reflection, immediately declared to the Bramins and witnesses present her resolution to burn; as the family was of no small consideration, all the merchants of Cossimbazaar, and her relations, left no arguments unessayed to dissuade her from it – Lady Russell, with the tenderest humanity, sent her several messages to the same purpose; the infant state of her children (two girls and a boy, the eldest not four years of age) and the terrors and pain of the death she sought, were painted to her in the strongest and most lively colouring – she was deaf to all, she gratefully thanked Lady Russell, and sent her word she had now nothing to live for, but recommended her children to her protection. When the torments of burning were urged *in terrorem* to her, she



with a resolved and calm countenance, put her finger into the fire, and held it there a considerable time; she then with one hand put fire in the palm of the other, sprinkled incense on it, and fumigated the Bramins. The consideration of her children left destitute of a parent was again urged to her. She replied, he that made them, would take care of them. She was at last given to understand, she should not be permitted to burn; this for a short space seemed to give her deep affliction, but soon recollecting herself, she told them, death was in her power, and that if she was not allowed to burn, according to the principles of her cast, she would starve herself. Her friends, finding her thus peremptory and resolved, were obliged at last to assent.

The body of the deceased was carried down to the water side, early the following morning, the widow followed about ten o'clock, accompanied by three very principal Bramins, her children, parents, and relations, and a numerous concourse of people. The order of leave for her burning did not arrive from Hosseyn Khan, Fouzdaar of Morshadabad, until after one, and it was then brought by one of the Soubah's own officers, who had orders to see that she burnt voluntarily. The time they waited for the order was employed in praying with the Bramins, and washing in the Ganges; as soon as it arrived, she retired and stayed for the space of half an hour in the midst of her female relations, amongst whom was her mother; she then divested herself of her bracelets, and other ornaments, and tyed them in a cloth, which hung like an apron before her, and was conducted by her female relations to one corner of the pile; on the pile was an arched arbor formed of dry sticks, boughs and leaves, open only at one end to admit her entrance; in this the body of the deceased was deposited, his head at the end opposite to the opening. At the corner of the pile, to which she had been conducted, the Bramin had made a small fire, round which she and the three Bramins sat for some minutes, one of them gave into her hand a leaf of the bale tree (the wood commonly consecrated to form part of the funeral pile) with sundry things on it, which she threw into the fire; one of the others gave her a second leaf, which she held over the flame, whilst he dropped three times some ghee on it, which melted, and fell into the fire (these two operations, were preparatory symbols of her approaching dissolution by fire) and whilst they were performing this, the third Bramin read to her some portions of the *Aughtorrah Bhade*, and asked her some questions, to which she answered with a steady, and serene countenance; but the noise was so great, we could not understand what she said, although we were within a yard of her. These over, she was led with great solemnity three times round the pile, the Bramins reading before her; when she came the third time to the small fire, she stopped, took her rings off her toes and fingers, and put them to her other ornaments; here she took a solemn majestic leave of her children, parents, and relations; after which, one of the Bramins dip'd a large wick of cotton in some



ghee, and gave it ready lighted into her hand, and led her to the open side of the arbor; there, all the Bramins fell at her feet; after she had blessed them, they retired weeping; by two steps, she ascending the pile and entered the arbor; on her entrance, she made a profound reverence at the feet of the deceased, and advanced and seated herself by his head; she looked, in silent meditation on his face, for the space of a minute, then set fire to the arbor, in three places; observing that she had set fire to leeward, and that the flames blew from her, instantly seeing her error she rose, and set fire to windward, and resumed her station; ensign Daniel with his cane, separated the grass and leaves on the windward side, by which means we had a distinct view of her as she sat. With what dignity, and undaunted a countenance, she set fire to the pile the last time, and assumed her seat, can only be conceived, for words cannot convey a just idea of her. The pile being of combustible matter, the supporters of the roof were presently consumed, and it tumbled upon her."

## **2. Sati at Banaras, William Hodges<sup>16</sup>**

WHILE I was pursuing my professional labours in Benares, I received information of a ceremony which was to take place on the banks of the river, and which greatly excited my curiosity. I had often read and repeatedly heard of that most horrid custom amongst, perhaps, the most mild and gentle of the human race, the Hindoos; the sacrifice of the wife on the death of the husband, and that by a means from which nature seems to shrink with the utmost abhorrence, by burning. Many instances of this practice have been given by travellers; those whom I have met with only mention it as taking place among the highest classes of society, whose vanity united with superstitious prejudices might have dictated the circumstance; and I confess I could not entertain any other ideas, when I observed the theatrical parade that seemed to attend it...

The person whom I saw was of the Bhyse (merchant) tribe or cast; a class of people we should naturally suppose exempt from the high and impetuous pride of rank, and in whom the natural desire to preserve life should in general predominate, undiverted from its proper course by a prospect of posthumous fame. I may add, that these motives are greatly strengthened by the exemption of this class from that infamy with which the refusal is inevitably branded in their superiors. Upon my repairing to the spot, on the banks of the river, where the ceremony was to take place, I found the body of the man on a bier, and covered with linen, already brought down and laid at the edge of the river. At this time, about ten in the morning, only a few people were assembled, who appeared destitute of feeling at the catastrophe that was to take place; I may even say that they displayed the most perfect apathy and indifference. After waiting a considerable time the wife appeared, attended by the Bramins, and music, with some few relations. The procession was slow and solemn; the



victim moved with a steady and firm step; and, apparently with a perfect composure of countenance, approached close to the body of her husband, where for some time they halted. She then addressed those who were near her with composure, and without the least trepidation of voice or change of countenance. She held in her left hand a cocoa nut, in which was a red colour mixed up, and dipping in it the fore-finger of her right hand, she marked those near her, to whom she wished to shew the last act of attention. As at this time I stood close to her, she observed me attentively, and with the colour marked me on the forehead. She might be about twenty-four or five years of age, a time of life when the bloom of beauty has generally fled the cheek in India; but still she preserved a sufficient share to prove that she must have been handsome: her figure was small, but elegantly turned; and the form of her hands and arms was particularly beautiful. Her dress was a loose robe of white flowing drapery, that extended from her head to the feet. The place of sacrifice was higher up on the bank of the river, a hundred yards or more from the spot where we now stood. The pile was composed of dried branches, leaves, and rushes, with a door on one side, and arched and covered on the top: by the side of the door stood a man with a lighted brand. From the time the woman appeared to the taking up of the body to convey it into the pile, might occupy a space of half an hour, which was employed in prayer with the Bramins, in attentions to those who stood near her, and conversation with her relations. When the body was taken up she followed close to it, attended by the chief Bramin; and when it was deposited in the pile, she bowed to all round her, and entered without speaking. The moment she entered, the door was closed; the fire was put to the combustibles, which instantly flamed, and immense quantities of dried wood and other matters were thrown upon it. This last part of the ceremony was accompanied with the shouts of the multitude, who now became numerous, and the whole seemed a mass of confused rejoicing. For my part I felt myself actuated by very different sentiments: the event that I had been witness to was such, that the minutest circumstance attending it could not be erased from my memory; and when the melancholy which had overwhelmed me was somewhat abated, I made a drawing of the subject.

### **3. Extract of a letter from the Hon. W. Osborne on the funeral of Maharaja Ranjit Singh<sup>17</sup>**

**Shimla, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1839.**

Runjeet Sing in dead, poor fellow! And died as like the old Lion as he had lived. He preserved his senses to the last, and was (which is unusual with native princes) obeyed to the last by all his chiefs, though he tried them high, as you will think, when I tell you that two hours before he died he sent for all



his jewels, and gave the famous diamond, called the "Mountain of Light," said to be the largest in the world, to a Hindoo temple, his celebrated string of pearls to another, and his favourite fine horses, with all their jeweled trappings, worth £ 300,000, to a third.

His four wives, all very handsome, burnt themselves with his body, as did five of his Cachmerian slave girls, one of whom, who was called the Lotus, or Lily, I often saw last year in my first visit to Lahore. Everything was done to prevent it, but in vain. They were guaranteed in their rank and in all their possessions, but they insisted upon it; and the account from the European officers who were present describes it as the most horrible sight. The four wives seated themselves on the pile with Runjeet Sing's head upon their laps; and his principal wife desired Kurruck Sing, Runjeet's son and heir, and Dhecan Sing, the late prime minister, to come to her upon the pile, and made the former take the Maharajah's dead hand in his own, and swear to protect and favour Dhecan Sing as Runjeet Sing had done; and she made the latter swear to bear the same true allegiance to the son which he had faithfully borne to his father.

She then set fire to the pile with her own hands, and they are dead – nine living beings having perished together without a shriek or a groan. Dhecan Sing threw himself twice on the pile, and said he could not survive his master, but was dragged away by main force. You have no idea what a sensation the poor old man's death has caused. All our treasure and supplies to the army of the Indus must go through the Punjab, and there are so many powerful and almost independent chiefs in the country, that the risk will be great without Runjeet Sing's mastermind to rule them. Kurruck Sing is well intentioned and well inclined towards us, but wants the courage and energy of his father. I send you a letter from the poor old man, nearly the last he ever wrote, which as an original of the Lion of Lahore (a great man here) may be considered a curiosity.

W.O.

## F. COURTESANS

### 1. In Bengal, John Splinter Stavorinus<sup>18</sup>

The women, although of a brown complexion, have engaging countenances, and are well proportioned. They intrigue with spirit, and are uncommonly wanton. They use every artifice to entrap the hearts of their male acquaintance, and especially strangers. Prostitution is not thought a disgrace: there are everywhere licensed places, where a great number of loose



women are kept; it is a livelihood that is allowed by law, upon payment to the *faujdar*, or sheriff, of the place, of a certain duty imposed upon the persons of the females who adopt this mode of life; they are generally assessed at half a rupee, or fifteen stivers, per month.

## 2. Charms of native women, Asiaticus [Philip Dormer Stanhope]<sup>19</sup>

I have seen ladies of the Gentoo cast, so exquisitely formed, with limbs so divinely turned, and such expression in their eyes, that if you can reconcile yourself to their complexions, you must acknowledge them not inferior to the most celebrated beauties of Europe. For my own part, I already begin to think the dazzling brightness of a copper-coloured face infinitely preferable to the pallid and sickly hue, which banishes the roses from the cheeks of the European fair, and reminds me of the death-struck countenance of Lazarus risen from the grave. The English ladies are immoderately fond of dancing, an exercise ill calculated for the burning climate of Bengal; and in my opinion, however, admissible in cooler latitudes, not a little indelicate in a country, where the inhabitants are covered with no more cloaths than what decency absolutely requires. Imagine to yourself the lovely object of your affections ready to expire with heat, every limb trembling, and every feature distorted with fatigue, and her partner with a muslin handkerchief in each hand employed in the delightful office of wiping down her face, while the big drops stand impearled upon her forehead; and then ask your own heart, if an Indian damsel, just risen from the limpid bath, in all the native charms of cleanliness and artless beauty, is not much more likely to inspire you with sentiments of desire and love.

## 3. In Kashmir, George Forster<sup>20</sup>

The city of Kashmire once abounded with courtezans, equally gay and affluent; but the rigorous contributions of the Afghans have greatly reduced their number, and driven most of those that remain into a languid poverty. The few that I saw, afforded me much pleasure by their graceful skill in dancing, and voices peculiarly melodious. And here let me observe least I should afterwards forget, that the women of Kashmire are singularly fruitful: be the government ever so oppressive, or fortune at all points adverse, no baneful effects are seen to operate on the propagation of the species which is maintained with a successful perseverance.

## 4. The Southern Bayadere, Bishop Heber<sup>21</sup>

A small old pagoda is in the entrance of the town, whose principal inmates, the presiding Brahmin and the dancing-girl, followed me to my tent. This was the first specimen which I had seen of the southern Bayadere,



who differ considerably from the nach girls of northern India, being all in the service of different temples, for which they are purchased young, and brought up with a degree of care which is seldom bestowed on the females of India of any other class. This care not only extends to dancing and singing, and the other allurements of their miserable profession, but to reading and writing. Their dress is lighter than the bundles of red cloth which swaddle the figurante of Hindostan, and their dancing is said to be more indecent, but their general appearance and manner seemed to me far from immodest, and their air even more respectable than the generality of the lower classes of India. The poor girl whom I saw at Sadras, making allowance for the difference of costume and complexion, might have passed for a smart, but modest English maidservant. The money which they acquire in the practice of their profession is hallowed to their wicked gods, whose ministers are said to turn them out without remorse, or with a very scanty provision, when age or sickness renders them unfit for their occupation. Most of them, however, die young. Surely, the more one sees of this hideous idolatry, the more one must abhor it, and bless God for having taught us better. I had heard that the Bayaderes were regarded with respect among the other classes of Hindoos, as servants of the gods, and that, after a few years service, they often married respectably. But, though I made several enquiries, I cannot find that this is the case; their name is a common term of reproach among the women of the country, nor could any man of decent caste marry one of their number. Yet the gods are honoured who receive such sacrifices! I have always looked on these poor creatures with no common feelings of sorrow and pity.

### **5. Dancers at Banaras, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>22</sup>**

In another quarter of the city our attention was allured by wily bayaderes, who came to the lattices, or on the galleries, and endeavoured to attract our notice. Benares is famed for training the most beautiful bayaderes, who are also consecrated within the walls of this city: they are very proud of the place of their birth, but go into the most distant provinces of the empire. Their life is frittered away in dress, folly, and dancing; and, as long as their charms have the power of attracting, it is interwoven, as a privilege, with a succession of fleeting, transient amours; yet this established custom not only gains them the esteem of the people, but even the protection of the priesthood. When they parade through the streets, seated on a carriage, drawn by fine oxen, and dressed in rich and gaily-coloured costume, the populace are quite delighted to get a sight of these beauties, who group themselves with the most singular grace and attraction, and, in the most seductive manner, suffer their elegant and voluptuous forms to appear to advantage beneath their aerial dress, or their light shawl, flung carelessly over their shoulders. As they pass along the streets



they sing a plaintive, monotonous song, accompanied by a tambourine, and a small trumpet, and, as they seem ever ready for sport, give vent to their mirth in humorous observations, while their fine large black eyes, which are encircled with antimony, gleam like sparks of fire.









## **Hindu Rulers**

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- A. General observations
- B. The Sikhs
- C. The Raja of Patiala
- D. Maharaja Gulab Singh of Kashmir
- E. The Jat rulers
- F. The Raja of Ballabgarh
- G. Rulers of Rajasthan
- H. The Marathas at Panipat
- I. The Gaikwar of Baroda
- J. Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra
- K. Raja Kishan Chand's family
- L. Raja of Banaras
- M. The Rajas of India

### **A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

#### **1. Sovereign did not possess despotic power, William Robertson<sup>1</sup>**

Though monarchical government was established in all the countries of India to which the knowledge of the ancients extended, the sovereigns were far from possessing uncontrolled or despotic power. No trace, indeed, is discovered there, of any assembly, or public body, the members of which, either in their own right or as representatives of their fellow-citizens, could interpose in enacting laws, or in superintending the execution of them. Institutions destined to assert and guard the rights belonging to men in social state, how familiar soever the idea may be to the people of Europe, never formed a part of the political constitution in any great Asiatic kingdom. It was to different principles that the natives of India were indebted for restrictions which limited



the exercise of regal power. The rank of individuals was unalterably fixed, the privileges of the different casts were deemed inviolable.

## B. THE SIKHS

### 1. Execution of Banda and his followers, John Surman and Edward Stephenson, who were in the capital on a trade mission on behalf of the East India Company, in a letter to their superiors in Calcutta dated March 10, 1716, report on the execution<sup>2</sup>

Some days ago they [Banda and his followers] entered the city laden with fetters, his whole attendants which were left alive being about seven hundred and eighty all severally mounted on camels which were sent out of the City for that purpose, besides about two thousand heads stuck upon poles, being those who died by the sword in battle. He was carried into the presence of the King, and from thence to a close prison. He at present has his life prolonged with most of his mutsuddys in the hope to get an Account of his treasure in the several parts of his Kingdom, and of those that assisted him, when afterwards he will be executed, for the rest there are 100 each day beheaded. It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatized from his new formed Religion.

### 2. Meeting with Ranjit Singh, William Moorcroft<sup>3</sup>

On the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> of May the Hakim [Aziz ad din, wazir of Ranjit Singh] came to conduct me to the presence of Ranjit Singh. Having passed through one of the western gates of the fort, we crossed the garden in which stands the Jama Masjid, or principal mosque. Thence a long flight of brick steps led to a second gateway and court, crossing which we came to a third gate that opened into a more spacious inclosure, in which stood a number of horses caparisoned. From this we entered a large court flagged with marble, and on the side opposite the entrance was an open apartment, in which the Maharaja was seated. Upon my approach he partly rose from his chair, which was of gold, and pointed to another, of silver, opposite to him, for me to sit down. His courtiers sat down upon the carpet on either side, forming a lane from his chair to mine. The gateways were well guarded, but here were only two matchlock-men, sitting one on either hand of the Raja. After the ordinary inquiries I expressed my thanks to him for the attentions I had received since entering his territories, and requested leave to offer the few trifles I had brought for his acceptance. These were a pair of double-barrelled, and a pair of three-barrelled pistols, a sword, and the model of a cannon, with carriage and all



appurtenances complete. This miniature piece of ordnance was made by Mr. Donnithorne, the mint master at Farokhabad, and was of singularly beautiful execution. To these I added some white chowri tails and bags of musk from the mountains. Ranjit was much pleased with the pistols, and still more with the cannon. Entering upon the main purpose of my travells, that of procuring horses, he ordered some of his to be exhibited, and about fifty were passed in review. They had all rich bridles, saddles, and housings, and were of the breeds of Dhani and Ghep, forest districts in the Punjab, the Lakhi Jangal, Rohtas, Atak, Kabul, and Bokhara. One which had cost 1700 rupees at Bokhara was beautifully made except in the legs below the knees and hocks, where he was too slight. For a grey Persian horse the Raja told me he had given 7000 rupees (700l), but it struck me as inferior to most of those exhibited. After the horses had been fully inspected I took my leave...

### **Parade**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> I was present upon the Raja's invitation at the parade of two regiments which he had formed on the model of the Company's sipahis. The men were Sikhs, Hindustani's, and Gorkhas: the first were in general tall well-looking men; the second were of a mixed appearance; the last generally short but muscular. The Raja beheld their evolutions from the top of a low building at the place, where I joined him. He seemed to take great interest in his regular battalions, but they are not popular amongst his officers. Desa Singh told Izzet Ullah that all Ranjit's conquests had been won by the sword, and he had never known the infantry and artillery of any service. The Raja told me that these regiments had been first trained by a Naik, who had deserted from the Company's service. He was very communicative. After the review he showed me some more of his horses, chiefly from Bokhara; and then consulted me on the state of his health, complaining much that he could not bear such strong potations as he had been used to do formerly; he told me also that he had once sent an account of his ailments to General Ochterlony, that a Europeans surgeon might prescribe for him, and that he had in consequence received some medicines, but had never taken any of them. These were afterwards sent to me, and finding one of them to be elixir or vitriol, I mixed a few drops with water, and drank it in the presence of the Hakim, in order to remove any suspicion that might lurk in a mind so constituted as that of Ranjit appears to be...

### **Ranjit tries to secretly view Lord Lake**

Early on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> I had my audience of leave. The Maharaja was peculiarly communicative and familiar. He told me that when Lord Lake entered the Panjab in pursuit of Holkar, he felt a strong desire to see the



European general and his officers. His courtiers endeavoured to dissuade him, affirming that the very sight would be unlucky; but he was determined to gratify himself, and for that purpose disguised himself as a common trooper, and accompanied by a party of his soldiers, repaired to the British camp. They went to Mr. Metcalfe's tent, and sent word that some Sikhs had come out of curiosity to see the Sahibs, and begged he would indulge them. He immediately complied with their desire, but soon distinguished Ranjit Singh amongst his visitors.

### 3. An inquisitive Indian, Victor Jacquemont<sup>4</sup>

I have spent a couple of hours on several occasions conversing with Ranjit *de omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis*. His conversation is a nightmare. He is almost the first inquisitive Indian I have seen, but his curiosity makes up for the apathy of his whole nation. He asked me a hundred thousand questions about India, the English, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general and the other one, hell and Paradise, the soul, God, the devil, and a thousand things besides. Like all persons of quality in the East he is a *malade imaginaire*, and since he has a large band of the loveliest girls of Kashmir and sufficient means to pay for a better dinner than anybody else in the country, he is particularly annoyed at not being able to drink like a fish without getting drunk, or eat like an elephant without choking. Women no longer give him any more pleasure than the flowers in his garden, and for good reasons, and that is the most cruel of his ills....

This model Asiatic king is no saint: far from it. He cares nothing for law or good faith, unless it is to his interest to be just or faithful; but he is not cruel. He orders very great criminals to have their noses and ears cut off, or a hand, but he never takes life. He has a passion for horses which amounts almost to a mania; he has waged the most costly and bloody wars for the purpose of seizing a horse in some neighbouring State which they had refused to give or sell him. He is extremely brave, a quality rather rare among Eastern princes, and though he has always been successful in his military campaigns, it has been by treaties and cunning negotiations that he has made himself absolute king of the whole Punjab, Kashmir, etc., and is better obeyed by his subjects than the Mogul emperors were at the height of their power. A professing Sikh, though in reality a sceptic, he goes to Amritsar every year to perform his devotions, and, oddly enough, visits the tombs of various Moslem saints as well; yet these pilgrimages do not upset any of his more strait-laced co-religionists.

### 4. Meeting with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, W.G. Osborne<sup>5</sup>

Cross-legged in a golden chair, dressed in simple white, wearing no



ornaments but a single string of enormous pearls round the waist, and the celebrated Kohy-nur, or mountain of light, on his arm, – (the jewel rivalled, if not surpassed, in brilliancy by the glance of fire which every now and then shot from his single eye as it wandered restlessly round the circle,) – sat the lion of Lahore.

On Runjeet's seating himself, his chiefs all squatted on the floor round his chair, with the exception of Dheean Sing, who remained standing behind his master.

Though far removed from being handsome himself, Runjeet appears to take a pride in being surrounded by good-looking people, and I believe few, if any other courts either in Europe or the East, could shew such a fine looking set of men as the principal Sikh Sirdars....

As soon as all were seated, and we had replied to Runjeet's inquiries after Lord Auckland's health, &c., the presents were produced, and apparently received with great satisfaction. Contrary to the usual native custom, Runjeet condescended to examine them very minutely, and appeared to count every pearl and jewel before he gave them into the hands of his treasurer...

### **Inquisitive nature**

As this was merely an audience of introduction, the object of the mission was not touched upon, and our time was principally occupied in answering Runjeet's innumerable questions, but without the slightest chance of being able to satisfy his insatiable curiosity. It is hardly possible to give an idea of the ceaseless rapidity with which his questions flow, or the infinite variety of subjects they embrace. "Do you drink wine?" "How much?" "Did you taste the wine which I sent you yesterday?" "How much of it did you drink?" "What artillery have you brought with you?" "Have they got any shells?" "How many?" "Do you like riding on horse-back?" "What country horses do you prefer?" "Are you in the army?" "Which do you like best, cavalry or infantry?" "Does Lord Auckland like wine?" "How many glasses?" "Does he drink it in the morning?" "What is the strength of the Company's army?" "Are they well disciplined?" &c...

### **Appearance**

Ill looking as he undoubtedly is, the countenance of Runjeet Sing cannot fail to strike every one as that of a very extraordinary man; and though at first his appearance gives rise to a disagreeable feeling almost amounting to disgust, a second look shews so much intelligence, and the restless wandering of his single fiery eye excites so much interest, that you get accustomed to his plainness, and are forced to confess that there is no common degree of intellect and acuteness developed in his countenance, however odd and repulsive its



first appearance may be.

His height is rather beneath the usual stature of the Sikhs, and a habitual stoop causes him to look shorter than he really is. He is by no means firm on his legs when he attempts to walk, but all weakness disappears when he is once on horseback. He has still a slight hesitation in his speech, the consequence of a paralytic stroke about three years ago; but those about him assert that his health is much improved within the last twelvemonth. His long white beard and mustachoes give him a more venerable appearance than his actual age would lead you to expect; and at fifty-eight years of age he is still a hale and hearty old man, though an imaginary invalid.

Runjeet Sing possesses great personal courage, a quality in which the Sikhs are supposed to be generally deficient; and until the last few years, always led his troops into action himself.

His character was formerly that of a generous and liberal master, and it was his custom to go into action with his arms covered with golden bracelets, and to reward with a pair of them any act of personal courage on the part of his soldiers which might happen to meet his observation. But the vice of old age, avarice, is fast creeping upon him; and at this moment, two out of three of his regular infantry regiments at Peshowar are in a state of open mutiny for want of their pay, one of them being eighteen, and the other twenty-two months in arrears.

With six millions sterling in his treasury at Amritsir, such is his love of money, that he will risk the loss of his kingdom rather than open his hoards, and disgusts his people and army by this ill-timed and cruel parsimony; at a time, too, when his most bitter enemies, Dost Mahommed Khan and the Afghans, are only watching for the first favourable opportunity to attempt his destruction.

### **Infantry parade**

*1<sup>st</sup> June* – Agreeably to invitation, we repaired this morning to meet the Maharajah, and see some of his regular infantry upon their parade. We found about two thousand men under arms, and some foot artillery. They are a fine-looking body of men, dressed in white jackets and trowsers, with black belts and pouches, and wear the yellow Sikh turban. They submit willingly to the same discipline and regulations as our own Sipahis, but have a prejudice against wearing a cap or shako, and previous to their enlistment make an agreement that they shall not be required to do so, or to shave.

They work in three ranks, and do everything by beat of drum, according to the French fashion; are not what is called well set up, but beautifully steady on parade, and fire with greater precision and regularity, both volleys and file firing, than any other troops I ever saw. They are paid the same as Company's Sipahis, or rather are promised that such will be the case, though they are



frequently upwards of a year, and seldom less than ten months, in arrears. When they are half-starved, and growing desperate, and Runjeet thinks they will bear no more, he makes a compromise with them, and giving half or one-third of what is due to them, half frightens and half cheats them into giving up all further claims. They are finer men, I think, than the Company's Sipahis, have fewer prejudices than most natives, and are more easily managed; and though, as a nation, the Sikhs are generally supposed to be wanting in courage, it is impossible to deny that Runjeet's troops have occasionally fought well. They are tall, rather slight, but very manly-looking men, with great length of limb, and broad, open chests; are excellent marchers, both as regards speed and bottom, for they are capable of making very long marches, not only on emergencies, but have done so with cheerfulness and alacrity for days together. They are hardy far beyond the generality of natives, and seem a merry, light-hearted race of people. All their movements on parade are very steady, but much too slow; they have but one pace for everything, and the double step is unknown to them.

The Sikh army possesses one great advantage over our own – the ease with which it can be moved. No wheel carriage is allowed on a march, their own bazaars carry all they require; and thirty thousand of their troops could be moved with more facility, and less expense and loss of time, than three Company's regiment on this side the Sutlege.

### **Artillery**

*3<sup>rd</sup> June* – Accompanied the Maharajah to his artillery practice ground, where we found twelve horse artillery guns, of different calibers, but tolerably well horsed and equipped. These guns are the refuse of his artillery, and only used to accompany him when he marches. His great depot is at Lahore, and is said to be very superior, and decidedly his best arm, and the one he takes most interest in. He was trying his own shells; at five hundred yards the practice was indifferent, but at eight and twelve hundred it was excellent. Many of the shells exploded exactly over the curtain; and when one burst with more than usual accuracy, he turned round and remarked, "I think that will do for Dost Mahommed." At the conclusion of the practice, we rode with him for a short time, and the sun getting hot, returned to our tents to a late breakfast.

### **5. 'He looked exactly like an old mouse,' Emily Eden<sup>6</sup>**

Yesterday was the day of the great meeting. All the ladies (only ten with the whole army) came to breakfast at half-past seven, and so did 'the great Panjandrum himself.'...

Runjeet had no jewels on whatever, nothing but the commonest red silk dress. He had two stockings on at first, which was considered an unusual



circumstance; but he very soon contrived to slip one off, that he might sit with one foot in his hand, comfortably. B. was much occupied in contriving to edge one foot of his chair on to the carpet, in which he at last succeeded.

Next to him sat Heera Singh, a very handsome boy, who is Runjeet's favourite, and was loaded with emeralds and pearls. Dhian Singh his father is prime minister, and uncommonly good-looking: he was dressed in yellow satin, with a quantity of chain armour and steel cuirass. All their costumes were very picturesque. There were a little boy and girl about four and five years old, children of some of Runjeet's sirdars who were killed in battle, and he always has these children with him, and has married them to each other. They were crawling about the floor, and running in and out between Runjeet and G., and at one time the little boy had got his arm twisted round G.'s leg. I sent to ask B. for two of the common pearl necklaces that are given as *khelwuts*, and sent them with a private note round to G., who gave them to the children, which delighted the old mouse.

After half an hour's talk, Sir W.C., with some of our gentlemen, marched up the room with my picture of the Queen on a green and gold cushion; all the English got up, and a salute of twenty-one guns was fired. Runjeet took it up in his hands, though it was a great weight, and examined it for at least five minutes, with his one piercing eye, and asked B. for an explanation of the orb and scepter, and whether the dress were correct, and if it were really like; and then said it was the most gratifying present he could have received and that on his return to his camp, the picture would be hung in front of his tent, and a royal salute fired. When all the other presents had been given that could come in trays, 200 shells (not fish, but gunpowder shells) were presented to the Maharajah, and two magnificent howitzers, that had been cast on purpose for him (as I think I told you), which seemed to please him; and outside, there was an elephant with gold trappings, and seven horses equally bedizened. His strongest passion is still for horses: one of these hit his fancy, and he quite forgot all his state, and ran out in the sun to feel its legs and examine it. Webb (the coachman) went down in the afternoon to take the Mizzur horses to Runjeet, and gave us such an amusing account of his interview.

## **6. A Fete for Ranjeet: Talking Friendship, Emily Eden<sup>7</sup>**

We had prepared our fete at the end of the street – a large compound enclosed on three sides with a large tent for us, and a small one for Runjeet filling up the fourth side, guards all round to prevent anybody who had not an invitation from going in. The large tent opened into a long *shemiana* – I hardly know how to explain that, but it is, in fact, a tent without sides, merely a roof supported by pillars; this looked out into the compound, which was laid out



like a flower garden, only instead of flowers there were little lamps laid out, as thickly as they could be placed, in the shape of flower borders. On the ground alone, P. said there were 42,000 lamps, and the garden was railed in by an *espalier* of lamps. It was really very pretty and odd. G. and Runjeet had their great chairs in the center, with B. on the other side of G., F. next to B., then Sir G.R. and a long row of ladies. I sat by the side of Runjeet, and next to me Kurruck Singh, his son, and then another long row of his sirdars.

The instant Runjeet sat down, three or four of his attendants came and knelt down before him – one, the Fakeer Uzeez-ood-deen, who is his interpreter and adviser and the comfort of his life. We all ought to have Uzeez-ood-deens of our own, if we wish to be really comfortable. The others arranged his gold bottle and glass, and plates of fruit, and he began drinking that horrible spirit, which he pours down like water. He insisted on my just touching it, as I had not been at his party on Saturday, and one drop actually burnt the outside of my lips. I could not possibly swallow it. Those two little brats, in new dresses, were crawling about the floor, and he poured some of his fire down their throats. We had two bands to play; and when the fireworks were over, a large collection of nautch-girls came in front of Runjeet, and danced and sang apparently much to his satisfaction. They were a very ugly set from Loodheeana. I could not help thinking how eastern we had become, everybody declaring it was one of the best-managed and pleasantest parties they had seen. All these satraps in a row, and those screaming girls and crowds of long bearded attendants, and the old tyrant drinking in the middle – but still we all said: ‘What a charming party!’ just as we should have said formerly at Lady C.’s or Lady J.’s. I could not talk with any great ease, being on the blind side of Runjeet, who converses chiefly with his one eye and a few signs which his fakeer makes up into a long speech; and Kurruck Singh was apparently an idiot. Luckily, beyond him was Heera Singh, who has learnt a little English, and has a good idea of making topics, and when C. came and established himself behind the sofa I got on very well with Runjeet.

After the conversation had lasted nearly an hour, there was, I suppose, a little pause between G. and him, for he turned round and said something which C. translated in his literal way, ‘The Maharajah wishes your lordship would talk a little more *friendship* to him.’ G. solemnly declared he had talked an immense deal of friendship, but, of course, he began again. Another of Runjeet’s topics was his constant praise of drinking, and he said he understood that there were books which contained objections to drunkenness, and he thought it better that there would be no books at all, than that they should contain such foolish notions. He is a very drunken old profligate, neither more nor less. Still he has made himself a great king; he has conquered



a great many powerful enemies; he is remarkably just in his government; he has disciplined a large army; he hardly ever takes away life, which is wonderful in a depot; and he is excessively beloved by his people. I certainly should not guess any part of this from looking at him.

## **7. Review of Horses, Emily Eden<sup>8</sup>**

The first show of the day was Runjeet's private stud. I suppose fifty horses were led past us. The first had on its emerald trappings, necklaces arranged on its neck and between its ears, and in front of the saddle two enormous emeralds, nearly two inches square, and carved all over, and set in gold frames, like little looking-glasses. The crupper was all emeralds, and there were stud-ropes of gold put up on something like a martingale. Heera Singh said the whole was valued at 37 lacs (370,000/); but all these valuations are fanciful, as nobody knows the worth of these enormous stones; they are never brought or sold. The next horse was simply attired in diamonds and turquoises, another in pearls, and there was one with trappings of coral and pearl that was very pretty. Their saddle-cloths have stones woven into them. It reduces European magnificence to a very low pitch.

## **8. Durbar for Ranjit Singh**

### **November 29<sup>th</sup>. Ferozepore, Fanny Eden<sup>9</sup>**

We have had a very busy morning. The great durbar for the reception of Runjeet was at eight o'clock, that the troops might not be kept out in the sun. There was an immense shew of troops got up for him. George had to go to meet him on his elephant a little way from the camp. As usual the crush of elephants at the moment of meeting was awful. Nothing can prevent the mahouts on both sides from pressing their elephants to the last moment. However, George succeeded in transferring Runjeet from his howdah to his own without dropping him. He is so very little there might have been some danger of such a catastrophe.

We received him in the outer tent, and he sat down on the sofa between us with his legs tucked up. There was an immense rush of followers after him and it was some time before they would go out and get into order. Almost all his immediate courtiers have excellent manners, thoroughly gentlemanlike, making their topics through an interpreter. He himself does not wear a single jewel, but some of his favourites are covered with them and all their dresses are perfectly magnificent. He examines everything quite closely with his one eye and asks an infinity of questions. The long beard is as white as this paper. Emily, from the various prints of her, had painted a picture of the Queen in her coronation robes, which turned out successfully, and this was



set in a large gold frame very much emeralded and diamonded and given to him. And it answered thoroughly. Sir W. Cotton brought it in and they all stood up and saluted...Runjeet said that when he got to his own camp and hung it up a salute of a hundred guns would be fired. Our presents to him have been very magnificent in the line of jewels, shawls, horses and canon. There was one horse took him so much he ran out into the sun to examine him, and a European man who took them to him had to ride them all before him for an hour and a half. He brought two little children with him, and five years old, a little boy and a girl, affianced to each other. They were orphans of his chiefs who had been killed in battle and he carries them about with him everywhere. They were tumbling about on the floor of the tent. George has to return his visit tomorrow.

### **9. Party by Ranjit Singh, Fanny Eden<sup>10</sup>**

I did not write yesterday, dear, because I had a deal to do. Runjeet was to give us a party at his tents. George, Macnaghten and William [Osborne, Military Secretary to Lord Auckland] set off for a private conference at three, I followed them at five, Emily meaning to keep her strength for the great review tomorrow. Sir W. Cotton was to go with me and I set off with him and his aides-de-camp in the carriage and a squadron of lancers to guard us – very grand and dusty. We had to cross the Sutlege into Runjeet's territories and had to get upon elephants to go over the bridges of boats. The approach to the tents was beautiful. They were surrounded by a large enclosure of scarlet and embroidered cloth, the tents themselves made of shawls and embroidered cashmere and all his chiefs covered in jewels and armour, and shawl drapery. I was a little shy on my first arrival among the Singh family. However, Heera Singh, a boy who has great power over Runjeet, and Sher Singh who is a great soldier and supposed to have an eye to the throne when Runjeet dies, talked very well through an interpreter. I was taken to a silver chair at the entrance of the tent where George and Runjeet and William were sitting, and in a few minutes they joined me. We were in a kind of open tent with silver pillars. It was soon filled with chiefs and nautch girls – in his troop of amazons as he calls them. I was disappointed in their beauty.

Runjeet's next step was to have a low solid gold table placed before him and two large gold branch candlesticks on the floor by it. The table was covered with gold bottles and cups and some specimens of Sikh cookery – spiced balls of meat, or rather essence of meat, of every strong composition, pomegranate seeds etc. There were two little ugly children as usual who serve Runjeet and me for our standing jokes. The composition he calls wine is like burning fire, much stronger than brandy, and his great delight when he sets in to be gay is to make people drink it. At first he was content with making George and Sir



W. Cotton swallow it – or rather pretend to swallow it. Then he began plying me with gold cupfuls. I got on very well for some time, pretending to drink it and passing it to his cup-bearer. But he grew suspicious, put it up his one eye, looked well into the cup, shook his head and gave it me back again. The next time he put his finger into the cup to see how much was gone. I made Major Wade explain to him that ladies did not drink so much in England, upon which he watched till George's head was turned away and passed a cup to me under his arm, thinking George was the horrid tyrant who prevented me. Fireworks were going all round us and nautch girls dancing before us all the time we were there. I got him to show us his 'Sea of Light,' [the Kohinoor] a diamond out of which he starved Shah Shoojah. It is as large as a small egg. Some of the emeralds he showed us at the same time are quite wonderful and I hope he came by them honestly.

In the course of the evening they brought the king a neat little tray and he took diamond bracelets from it and put them on my arms, and a large diamond ring which he put on my finger, and a large string of pearls which puzzled us both dreadfully to get over my bonnet. I went in a bonnet because though the Sikhs think very ill of us for appearing at all, they would think still worse of us if we were to appear with our heads uncovered. When Runjeet's countenance lights up he is very clever. Otherwise he sits like a little old grey statue. We left him still drinking when we came away and we were not left with the impression that the Sikhs lead strictly moral lives.

### **10. Ranjit Singh provides for English regiments, Fanny Eden<sup>11</sup>**

Runjeet...feeds us all, to the lowest camp followers. Nothing is allowed to be bought in the bazaar, and with three regiments you may conceive the expense...

We have not moved today. The Maharajah sent word, he knew it was not our custom to travel on Sundays so he had provided two days' provisions. The united sense of all the political agents has been put together to stop this provisioning system. With three regiments in addition to the usual number of camp followers, I am afraid to say how many thousand people are to be fed, and it must be a heavy burden on Runjeet's chiefs and people, though he does not care himself. Moreover it is a point of conscience to make the soldiers and servants indent for only strict necessities, and as they are all well paid they would rather be allowed to have what they like and pay for it. However, it turns out to be the custom to feed allies who march through the kingdom, and it would be considered a national disgrace to do otherwise. The very fire wood we burn is sent to us, and as I never see a tree I want to ask Runjeet confidentially where it comes from.



**11. The Koh-i-noor, W.G. Osborne<sup>12</sup>**

Soon after sunrise, Sirdar Ajeet Sing arrived in camp to conduct us to the city where the Maharajah held a public durbar in his palace, for the purpose of investing us with the dresses of honour, and giving us leave to depart from his court. We found him sitting with most of his chiefs around him, in a small marble hall in the garden of his palace, and after half an hour's gossip on various subjects, I put him in mind of his promises to shew me the Koh-i-noor, which he immediately sent for. It certainly is a most magnificent diamond, about an inch and a half in length, and upwards of an inch in width, and stands out from the setting, about half an inch; it is in the shape of an egg, and is set in a bracelet between two very handsome diamonds of about half its size. It is valued at three million sterling, is very brilliant, and without a flaw of any kind. Runjeet was anxious to know what it would be valued at in England, and whether we had ever seen so fine a one, &c. His string of pearls was, I think, if possible, even handsomer than the diamond; they are about three hundred in number, and literally the size of small marbles, all picked pearls and round, and perfect both in shape and colour.

**C. THE RAJA OF PATIALA, GODFREY CHARLES MUNDY<sup>13</sup>**

[March 1828] Two days after, we entered the territories of the Patialah Chief, a Rajah of the Seikh tribe, whose dominions extend over a wide tract of country between the Jumna and Sutledge rivers. He is the most powerful of this sect after Runjeet Singh of Lahore, who rules the Punjab, a district between the Indus and the Sutledge. The Patialah Rajah holds his court at the modern town of the same name; Sirhind, the ancient capital of the province, having fallen to ruin. A political agent of the honourable Company resides constantly at the seat of government...

About 2 miles from Sirhind the Rajah of Patialah came out to meet Lord Combermere [Commander-in-Chief]. The cavalry portion of his escort were very fine martial-looking troops, but his infantry, dressed in imitation of the Company's sepoy, were the most absurd-looking rabble possible...

The Rajah came in the afternoon in grand state to our camp, to visit the Commander-in-Chief. He is a remarkably fine man, with high, noble features, a quiet, benevolent expression of countenance, and a long beard flowing over his breast: but it was not until he had dismounted from his elephant, and raised himself from the stooping posture he was obliged to assume on entering the door of the Durbar tent, that we remarked his amazing stature. He is at least 6 feet 4 inches, large boned, muscular, and erect; and as he stepped forward to embrace Lord Combermere, it appeared that, with the slightest increase of



energy in his hug, he might have crushed him to pieces. His person was totally unadorned by jewels (though his son and nephew, boys of twelve and eight, were covered with precious stones). A large circular shield of buffalo's hide, studded with gold, hung on his shoulders, and a long sword and dagger were stuck through his waist-shawl. Many of his warrior attendants, whose rank entitled them to sit at the Durbar, were nearly as tall as their chief, and all armed to the teeth.

The Seikhs have a great variety of weapons. I observed, among his escort, the musket, matchlock, sword, spears of sundry forms, dagger, and battle-axe; but the arm that is exclusively peculiar to this sect is the quoit: it is made of beautiful thin steel, sometimes inlaid with gold; in using it, the warrior twirls it swiftly round the forefinger, and launches it with such deadly aim, as, according to their own account, to be sure of their man at 80 paces....

It is presumed by certain historical speculators, that the battle between Alexander the Great and Porus, the Indian chief, took place somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sirhind. The present Rajah of Patialah is no bad representative of the gigantic Porus, and, indeed, he is distinguished by that title among the English,

### **D. MAHARAJA GULAB SINGH OF KASHMIR, ALEXANDER GARDNER<sup>14</sup>**

The character of Gulab Singh in the early days of his power was one of the most repulsive it is possible to imagine. Ambitious, avaricious, and cruel by nature, he reduced the exercise of his cruelty to a system for the promotion of the objects which his ambition and avarice led him to seek. He exercised the most ruthless barbarities, not in the heat of conflict or the flush of victory only, nor in the rage of an offended sovereign against rebellious subjects: he deliberately committed the most horrible atrocities for the purpose of investing his name with a terror that should keep down all thoughts of resistance to his sway.

To turn to smaller traits; he is an eater of opium, he tells long stories, offers little, promises less, but keeps his word; has a good memory, and is free and humorous with even the lowest and poorest class of his subjects. The partaker and companion of their toils and labours, seeming to be their diligent and careful instructor and father, their intimate village brother, their free, jocose, humorous neighbour, their constant visitor; yet, with all this, in reality a very leech, sucking their life's blood, the shameless trader of their sons and daughters; the would-be great merchant of the East, the very jack-of-all-trades, the usurer, the turn-penny, the briber and the bribed. With all this he must be



accounted the very best of soldiers, and, for an Asiatic and an uneducated man, he is an able, active, bold, and energetic, yet wise and prudent commander. He is anything but strong-headed and hot-blooded; prudently making slow, resolute, and judicious movements, thinking more of his resources, reserves, &c., than is the wont of Orientals. Looking more to the future and its wants and requisites than to the present or the past, slowly he proceeds, feeling his way as he advances, quick in taking advantages, relying much on his subtle political talent, and looking on arms as his last resource. In the field of battle he is self-composed, prudent, and watchful to the last degree; but at the breach, storm, or charge, he freely, though reluctantly, expands his men, while himself just the man to be at their head if required. Generally, however, he is the cool and able commander in the rear.

## E. JAT RULERS

### 1. Skilfulness of Suraj Mal, Father Wendel<sup>15</sup>

One would perhaps say that this Jat had too large a portion of good fortune in all his enterprises and that it would seem that fate was pleased to favour him extraordinarily. With this I would in part agree; however, one cannot deny him a certain poise in the most deplorable situations, and a wisdom of I do not know which quality, though not erudite in the art of governing, which he possessed equally with the greatest men of time, and I would be bold as to say that he exceeded the majority of them. During the time in which the *nawabs* and other mighty Mohammedans of Hindustan were obliged to serve at their own costs the Abdali in his large expeditions to pillage and ravage their own country, being enjoined to proffer money towards his exploits, Suraj Mal, on his own lands, knew to protect his territory from the designs of such a formidable enemy, enjoyed calm in the midst of troubles in which more or less all his neighbours were involved, consolidating his power while others fell; in a word, growing during the general decline of the empire.

### 2. Portrait of Suraj Mal, Father Wendel<sup>16</sup>

He was of above-average height and robust with a rather dark complexion and quite heavy features. He had intense sparkling eyes and his entire physiognomy showed more fire than one noticed in his bearing, which was gentle and versatile, though of the gentleness of a cat, so to say, who did not fail to make felt his claws at the same time as he would have appeared to be most endearing. For more than twenty years he had almost solely the direction of affairs. When Badan Singh was still alive, and afterwards, four children were born to him of the four women he is known to have had at the same



time: Nahar Singh, his heir apparent born of a Jatni; Jawahar Singh and Ratan Singh, born of concubine of the Gauruva caste; and Nawal Singh, of another. Hansia, his beloved, sister of Balram, was barren; she adopted Jawahar Singh as her son, who, however, badly repaid her. Being of peasant extraction, he knew to distinguish himself among people of merit and to esteem them. Having found the Jats already rich, but *zamindars* and still unknown, except through thievery, he left them powerful and reputed throughout Hindustan. Although of a nature to not pay much heed to others, he never failed in respect towards those whom he held to be of a station above his own. He nevertheless showed that he was not altogether so flexible in his actions as he was in his conversation. Until a few years before his death, when he no longer relied upon the *raja* Madho Singh, he never omitted to go annually to Jaipur at the time of *dasahra*, to pay him his respects, recognizing his indebtedness to the *raja* as his vassal; however, truthfully said, this was more by word than deed. He had always the greatest attention for the person of the late *wazir* Ghazi-ud-din Khan, although formerly his cruelest enemy, and after he had taken refuge with him, he did not permit anyone to offend him, neither those of his following, nor his descendants. In a word, he was politic, valiant and great beyond his extraction, to the extent to awaken admiration and even fear beyond his domain. One cannot re-approach him enough for a base envy of the wealth of others, even after he had raised himself to the highest fortune, having always kept at his command bands of robbers who brought him booty, and whom he could never resolve to relinquish. His covetousness compelled him to economise more than was becoming, considering the immense riches in his possession. It went to the extent of miserliness, often causing family and troops to languish in indigence and, at his death, he owed the salary of two years to all his people, whom his successor immediately satisfied....

He was proud to be *zamindar*, knowing to value the land which he little by little subjugated, and to conserve the peace or hasten to its defense. There were few or no foreign troops in his service. With his Jats he made himself master of a vast territory. They cultivated the land, they defended it; he made warriors of them and, after their military duties for which he had needed them, they returned to their ploughs, no less industrious peasants than courageous soldiers, when it was a matter of defending the territory where they were settled. In this way, Suraj Mal avoided superfluous expenditures, at the same time as he drew from the country in abundance the wherewithal to very considerably augment the deposit in his treasury. He was loved by his own and respected by all near to him, not so much because of the exploits which he accomplished, as because he was forthright in his capability to do what he had taken upon himself. Disciple of Jai Singh, there was almost no one else in Hindustan in his time, excepting Najib Khan, head of the Rohelas, who knew to conduct



himself with greater wisdom and approbation as ruler. The reputation of the Jats rose under him so high that one might say it can become no greater, and that after him (as the fortune of men cannot remain forever fixed and firm for along period in one place), it must decline.

## **F. THE RAJA OF BALLABGARH, BISHOP HEBER<sup>17</sup>**

The Raja of Bullumghur holds a considerable territory along this frontier [Faridabad] as a feudatory of the British Government, on the service of maintaining two thousand men to do the ordinary police duties, and guard the road against the Mewattee and other predatory tribes. The family and most of their people are of the Jat race, and they have for many generations been linked by friendship and frequent intermarriages with the neighbouring Raja of Bhurtpoor, who is now our friend, but whose gallant and successful defence of his castle against the Lord Lake during the Maharatta war, has raised the character of Jats, previously a very low caste to considerable estimation for their valour in all this part of India. The present acting Raja of Bullumghur is only Regent, being guardian to his nephew, a boy now educating at Delhi. I had heard the Regent and his brother described as hospitable and high-spirited men, and was not sorry to have an opportunity of seeing a Hindoo court.

January 4. – A little before day-break we set off as usual, through a country something and but little, more fertile than that we had passed. It improved, however, gradually as we approached Bullumghur, which, by its extensive groves, gave evidence of its having been long the residence of a respectable native family. I was not, however, at all prepared for the splendour with which I was received. First, we saw some of the wild-looking horsemen, whom I have already described, posted as if on the look-out, who, on seeing us, fired their matchlocks and galloped off as fast as possible. As we drew nearer we saw a considerable body of cavalry with several camels and elephants, all gaily caparisoned, drawn up under some trees, and were received by the Raja himself, a fat and overgrown man, and his younger brother, a very handsome and manly figure, the former alighting from a palanquin, the other from a noble Persian horse, with trapping which swept the ground. I alighted from my horse also and the usual compliments and civilities followed. The elder brother begged me to excuse his riding with me as he was ill, which indeed we had heard before, but the second went by my side, reining in his magnificent steed, and shewing off the animal's paces and his own horsemanship. Before and behind were camels, elephants, and horsemen, with a most strange and barbarous music of horns, trumpets, and kettle-drums, and such a wood of spears, that I could not but tell my companion that his castle



deserved its name of "Fort of Spears." As we drew nearer, we saw the fort itself, with high brick walls, strengthened with a deep ditch and large mud bastions, from which we were complimented with a regular salute of cannon. Within we found a small and crowded, but not ill-built town, with narrow streets, tall houses, many temples, and a sufficient number of Brahminy bulls to shew the pure Hindoo descent of the ruler. The population of the little capital was almost all assembled in the streets, on the walls, and on the house-tops, and salaamed to us as we came in. We passed through two or three sharp turns, and at length stopped at the outer gate of a very neat little palace, built around a small court planted with jonquills and rose-bushes, with a marble fountain in the center, and a small open arched hall, where chairs were placed for us. Sitringees were laid, by way of carpet, on the floor, and the walls were ornamented with some paltry Hindoo portraits of the family, and some old fresco paintings of gods, goddesses, and heroes encountering lions and tygers.

## G. RULERS OF RAJASTHAN

### 1. Jai Singh, the Raja of Amber : the Jesuits<sup>18</sup>

[Jai Singh, the Raja of Amber, had asked Dupleix to procure him two astronomers from Chandernagore. The General Superior of the Jesuit Order in India consented "in the hope that (the prince) would be more favorably disposed to Christians." On 6 January 1734, they left Chandernagore for Delhi. They described Jai Singh as] a rich, powerful prince, well-versed in astronomy, for which he spared no expenses. He had several astronomers who observed the skies night and day without a break, in magnificent observatories that he had built at his own cost, particularly those; in Delhi... and Jaipur, a fair-sized city, at least as big as Orleans... All the streets of this city are perfectly straight...

### 2. The Rana of Udaipur, Bishop Heber<sup>19</sup>

The Ranah of Oodeypoor has a large extent of territory and, in ordinary years, a singularly fertile one, were these people to cultivate it. But he was quite ruined and beggared by Bapoo Sindia and Jumsheed Khan. Half his revenues at least are mortgaged to shroffs and money-lenders and his people are pitifully racked in order to pay the exorbitant interest of his debts. It has been the misfortune of his family to have been the oldest and purest in India; to be descended in a right light from the Sun without any debasing mixture, having resisted all attempts of the Emperors of Delhi to effect an intermarriage of the houses, and reckoning, I believe, in their pedigree, one or two Avatars of the Deity. In consequence they have been generally half mad with pride, perpetually marrying among themselves, fond of show and magnificence



beyond their means, or the usual custom of Hindoo Sovereigns, and very remarkably deficient in knowledge and intelligence. The present Ranah adds to all these advantages a great fondness for opium. In consequence the revenue is collected in the most oppressive, and dissipated in the most absurd manner, and except in the large towns which have obtained, more or less, the protection of the British Resident. The country, Dr. Gibb said, has profited infinitely less than either Malwah or the rest of Meywar, by the peace which it has enjoyed since the destruction of the Pindarrees. Yet, in connection with Jyepoor, the country is plentiful and thriving. Corn is cheap, and the number of beggars less than I have seen on this side of Delhi. And when the very unfavourable season is taken into consideration, I really think that present appearances may be well accounted for, without supposing any great oppression on the part of their government.

## H. THE MARATHAS AT PANIPAT, FATHER WENDEL<sup>20</sup>

They introduced themselves there for the first time under the reign of Muhammad Shah; from him they obtained subsequently the rule of Ujjain in Malwa, whence they spread through the empire. Being called upon in the contentions which arose between *rajas* and *umaras*, they themselves gradually developed to masters of the greater part of the regions of this vast empire.

*Marathas*: One speaks everywhere of those people, the Deccan is replete with their names and might, as is Hindustan and, in a word, the entire Grand Mughal monarchy....

Bhao, having obtained a certain advantage over a Pathan detachment left at Kunjpura, not far from Panipat towards the Jamuna, thought himself already to be victorious; he then advanced to Panipat within sight of the Abdali, where he erroneously began to entrench. The Pathans allowed this to pass; subsequently all his communication lines with the surrounding region were severed and the Marathas remained as if blockaded by themselves. Finally, after three months, despairing of the extreme drought which made itself felt in the camp, they left their trenches and threw themselves at the Abdalis and allies. However, being vigorously met and repulsed on all sides, they retreated, with the enemy in front, by whom they were violently attacked, and behind, the ditch which had been made for their security all around the entrenchment. Thus pressed and toppled one over the other, they were quickly altogether routed and the majority cut to pieces, as much as the Abdalis had the force to kill them, which they continued to do for several days after the battle. Bhao perished there with the greater part of his men, leaving immense booty for the conquerors. Nothing was saved. Ten to fifteen thousand had the good fortune



to escape with Malhar Rao, who, on the fourth day following the engagement, regained their breath near Agra, more than 120 *kos* from the field of battle.

They took on this occasion more than 8,000 Marathas captive, besides the people who follow along with such a large army. Artillery, treasure, baggage, everything remained there and the Marathas had never brought so much from the Deccan. The Pathans, in fact, obtained enough in this affair to not need to think again so soon of another expedition. One had wanted then to restore Bhao, and there were actually those who assumed his name and title and who had influence; it was even maintained that Bhao had been recognized with certainty. And, although all that was dispelled shortly afterwards, it is still said that, having wanted to make his way to the Deccan, he was assassinated by order of those who are today in power. It is certain that he no longer lives, and that with him the greater part of the Maratha's power in Hindustan also went to the grave.

## **I. THE GAIKWAR OF BARODA, BISHOP HEBER<sup>21</sup>**

The Guicwar is said to be a man of talent who governs his states himself, his minister having very little weight with him, and governs them well and vigorously. His error is too great a fondness for money, but as he found the state involved in debt, even this seems excusable. His territory is altogether considerable, both in Cutch, Catteywar, and Guzerat, though strangely intersected and cut up by the territories of Britain, Sindia, and several independent Rajas. Those of Lunewarra and Doongurpoor, which used to hold of Sindia, now pay him tribute also, as do the Rajas of Palhanpoor and Catteywar. Still his income, amounting to no less than eighty lacs, or, nearly, £800,000, exceeds greatly any thing which might have been expected from the surface under his rule, and the wild and jungly nature of some parts of it, and can only be accounted for by the remarkable population and fertility of those districts which are really productive. Out of these revenues he has only 3000 irregular horse to pay, his subsidiary force being provided for out of the ceded territory, and he is therefore, probably, in more flourishing circumstances, and possesses more real power than any sovereign of India except Runjeet Singh. Sindia, and, perhaps, the Raja of Mysore, might have been excepted, but the former, though with three times his extent of territory, has a very imperfect control over the greater part of it, and, indeed, cannot govern his own house: and the latter is, apparently, intent on nothing but amusing himself, and wasting his income on costly follies of state-coaches and gimcracks, to which the Guicwar wisely prefers the manner of living usual with his ancestors...



### Visit of Gaikwar

In the evening we went in all the state which we could muster, to pay our visit to the Guikwar, who received us, with the usual Eastern forms, in a long narrow room, approached by a very mean and steep stair-case. The hall itself was hung with red cloth, adorned with a great number of paltry English prints, lamps, and wall-shades, and with a small fountain in the centre. At the upper end were cushions piled on the ground as his Highness's musnud, with chairs placed in a row on his left hand for the Resident and his party. The evening went off in the usual form, with Nach girls, Persian musicians, &c. and the only things particularly worthy of notice were, that his Highness went through the form of giving the Resident and myself a private audience in his own study, a little hot room up sundry pair of stairs, with a raised sofa, a punkah, and other articles of European comfort as well as two large mirrors, a print of Buonaparte, and another of the Duke of Wellington. He there shewed me a musical snuff-box with a little bird, in which he seemed to take much pride and an imperfect but handsome copy of the Shah Nameh, of which he desired me to accept. The rest of our conversation consisted of enquiries after the Governor General, the war, the distance from Calcutta, and other such princely topics, till, a reasonable time for our consultation having elapsed, we returned down stairs again. The next thing that struck me was the manner in which the heir-apparent, made his appearance in the Durbar, announced by nearly the same acclamations as his father, and salaaming, as he advanced, to the persons of rank, with almost equal grace, and more than equal gravity. After bending very low, and touching the ground before his father's seat, he went up to Mr. Williams with the appearance of great pleasure, climbed upon his knee, and asked him for a pencil and paper with which he began to scribble much like my own dear little girl. The third circumstance I remarked was the general unconstrained, and even lively conversation which was carried on between the Raja, his courtiers, and Mr. Williams, who talked about their respective hunting feats, the merits of their elephants, &c. much as, *mutatis mutandis*, a party in England might have done...

### J. RAJA SANSAR CHAND OF KANGRA, WILLIAM MOORCROFT<sup>22</sup>

Raja Sansar Chand is a tall, well-formed man, about sixty. His complexion is dark, but his features are fine and expressive. His son, Rai Anirudha Sinh, has a very handsome face and ruddy complexion, but is remarkably corpulent. He has two sons, one of twelve, the other of five years of age, both less fair than himself. Sansar Chand was formerly the most powerful Raja from the



Setlej to the Indus. All the potentates from the former river to Kashmir were his tributaries or dependants, and he was extremely wealthy, possessing a revenue of thirty-five lacs of rupees. He is now poor, and in danger of being wholly subjected to Ranjit Singh. His misfortunes are mainly owing to himself, and his decline presents a remarkable contrast to the rise of his neighbour, and now paramount lord, Ranjit Singh.

## **K. RAJA KISHAN CHAND'S FAMILY, BISHOP HEBER<sup>23</sup>**

...in a court, whose gateway had still its old folding doors on their hinges, the two boys whom we had seen on the beach came forward to meet us, were announced to us, as the great grand-sons of Raja Kissen Chund, and invited us very courteously, in Persian, to enter their father's dwelling. I looked round in exceeding surprise. There was no more appearance of habitation than in Conway. Two or three cows were grazing among the ruins, and one was looking out from the top of a dilapidated turret, whither she had scrambled to browse on the ivy. The breech of a broken cannon, and a fragment of a mutilated inscription lay on the grass, which was evidently only kept down by the grazing of cattle; and the jackalls, whose yells began to be heard around us as the evening closed in, seemed the natural lords of the place. Of course, I expressed no astonishment, but said how much respect I felt for their family, of whose ancient splendour I was well informed, and that I should be most happy to pay my compliments to the Raja, their father.

They immediately led up a short, steep, straight flight of steps, in the thickness of the wall of one of the towers, precisely such as that of which we find the remains in one of the gateways of Rhuddlan Castle, assuring me that it was a very "good road;" and at the door of a little vaulted and unfurnished room like that which is shews in Carnarvon Castle, as the queen's bed-chamber, we were received by the Raja Omichund, a fat shortish man, of about 45, of rather fair complexion, but with no other clothes than his waist-cloth and Brahminical string, and only distinguished from his vassals by having his forehead marked all over with alternate stripes of chalk, vermilion, and gold leaf. The boys had evidently run home to inform him of our approach, and he had made some preparations to receive us in Durbar. His own Musnud was ready, a kind of mattress laid on the ground, on which, with a very harmless ostentation, he had laid a few trinkets, a gold watch, betel-nut box, &c. Two old arm-chairs were placed opposite for Stowe and me. The young Rajas sat down at their father's right hand and his naked domestics ranged themselves in a line behind him, with their hands, respectfully folded. On the other side the Sotaburdar stood behind me: Stowe's servant took place behind him, and



Abdullah between us as interpreter, which function he discharged extremely well, and which was the more necessary, since in strict conformity with court etiquette, the conversation passed in Persian. I confess I was moved by the apparent poverty of the representative of a house once very powerful, and paid him more attention than I, perhaps, might have done had his drawing-room presented a more princely style...

## L. VISIT TO THE RAJAH OF BANARAS, EMILY EDEN<sup>24</sup>

The Rajah of Benares asked us to come to his country-house called Ramnugger (how it is spelt, I cannot say; probably with none of those letters). It is on the other side of the Ganges. We drove down to the river-side through a dense cloud of dust. I asked one of our servants to *dust* me gently with my pocket-handkerchief, and without any exaggeration a thick cloud came out of my cape...

We found the rajah's boats waiting for us – a silver armchair and footstool for his lordship in the prow, which was decorated with silver peacocks, and a sort of red embroidered tent for '*his women*', where we placed ourselves, though there was another boat with two inferior silver chairs for F. [her sister Fanny] and me. All these things are grandly imagined, but with the silver chairs there are boatmen in dirty liveries or no liveries at all! – and it is all *discrepant*, or generally so.

The rajah is immensely rich; he had a great many handsome things. I enclose a sketch to illustrate for the children 'their dear devoted creature', G. [her brother George], first in the silver tonjaun that took him up from the ghaut, and then a back view of him on his elephant. I often wonder whether it really can be G. the original simple, quiet one. He does it very well, but detests great part of the ceremonies, particularly *embracing* the rajahs!

The rajah met us at the ghaut, and we were all carried off to the elephants, and got on them to go and see his garden, though it was nearly dusk. But the first sight was very striking.

Eighteen elephants and crowds of attendants, and then crowds as far as we could see of natives, going 'Wah! Wah! Hi Lord Sahib.' We rode about till it was quite dark, and then the rajah proposed we should return; and when we came to the turn of the road, the whole of the village and his castle, which is an enormous building, was illuminated. Wherever there was a straight line, or a window, or an arch, there was a row of little bright lamps; every cross of the lattices in every window had its little lamp. It was the *largest* illumination I ever saw. We went on the elephants through the great gateway, in a Timour the Tartar fashion, into the court. Such torches and spearmen and drums and



crowds, like a melodrama magnified by a solar microscope; it was the sort of scene where Ellen Tree [a well-known actress] would have snatched up a doll from under Farley's sword, and said, 'My boy, my boy, my rescued Agib!' or words to that effect, while the curtain fell slowly. We got off at the door of an immense hall, a sort of court, and the rajah's servants spread a path of scarlet and gold kincob from the door to the seat at the farthest end, for us to walk on. Considering that it is a pound a yard, and that I have been bargaining for a week for enough for a wadded *douillette* and was beat out of it, it was a pity to trample on....The rajah put us three on a velvet sofa, with a gold gauze carpet before it. He sat on one side of us and his father on the other, and Mr. B. and Mr. C. on each side to interpret, and then the aides-de-camp and the other ladies; and then the nautch-girls began dancing. He had provided an immense troop of them, and they were covered with jewels and dressed in gold brocades, some purple and some red, with long floating scarfs of gold gauze. Most of them ugly, but one was I think the prettiest creature I ever saw, and the most graceful. If I have time I will send a little coloured sketch of her, just to show the effect of her dress. She had another girl danced slowly round with their full draperies floating round them, without stopping, for a quarter of an hour, during all which time they were making flowers out of some coloured scarfs they wore, and when they had finished a bunch they came and presented it to us with such graceful Eastern genuflexions.

The whole thing was like a dream, it was so curious and unnatural. Then the Ranee sent for us, and F. and I set off in tonjauns for the women's apartments, with the ladies who were with us. They carried us through a great many courts, and then the rajah gave me his cold, flabby little hand, and handed us up some narrow, dirty stairs, and came in with us behind the purdah and introduced us to the Ranee his mother, who was very splendidly dressed, and to some of his sisters, who were ugly. Then they asked us to go and see an old grandmother, and the Ranee laid hold of my hand, and one of the sisters took F., and they led us along an immense court on the roof, to the old lady, who is blind and very ill; but they had dressed her up for us, and we had to kiss her, which was not very nice. There was another immense nautch provided, which we had not time to look at. We gave our rings, and they brought the trays of presents which are usually given, a diamond ring and drops for earrings, two necklaces (very trashy), some beautiful shawls and kincobs, and some muslin; then they put immense skipping-ropes of silver braid, bigger than a common boa, round our necks, and small ones on the other ladies, and then poured attar of roses on our hands, and we left the old lady. When we came back to the Ranee's room, she showed us her little *chapel*, close to her sofa, where there were quantities of horrid-looking idols – Vishnu, and so on. Several native girls were introduced to us, but only one who was pretty, and who has just



been betrothed to the father of the rajah. The young Ranees, or whatever they are called, are very shy, and stand with their eyes closed, but the older ones had great fun when we were going away in pouring the attar over our gowns, and utterly spoiled mine, which was silk; next time I shall go in muslin. When we came down, the trays for G. were brought in; they covered what would be called a very large room, and some of the gold stuffs have turned out to be very beautiful. It is a stupid etiquette, that we are not to appear to see these presents. It is a *tribute* and the superior is too grand to see what the inferior offers. When that was done, we went to the illumination, which was done on a very large scale, but not so neatly as at home; then to the boat, where the rajah accompanied us, and there was a second illumination on the river, much more beautiful than the first – and the blue lights, and the crowds, and the great pile of buildings made a grand show. We got back at eleven, very tired and starving hungry, but it was a curious sight and much to be remembered.

## M. THE RAJAS OF INDIA, CAPTAIN LEOPOLD VON ORLICH<sup>25</sup>

On a lovely morning, the 5<sup>th</sup> of February [1843], we rode to Delhi, the ancient Indraprast'ha, the capital of the Great Moguls: we were all mounted on elephants, because, according to etiquette, the Governor General could only approach on this noble animal. Luxuriant fields of wheat, already in ear, lay extended before us, interspersed with the most fantastic ruins, the arches, domes, and columns of which rose above the thick foliage of the trees, or were covered with their branches as with a magic veil. Behind these ruins we saw the sun rise in all its glory and beauty: a sunrise more magnificent and striking I have never seen.

Near a ruined caravansary, about a mile before our camp, the chief men of Delhi, mounted on about fifty elephants, were ranged in a line closed by the road side, waiting for the approach of the Governor-General. It was really very imposing to see so many richly-adorned elephants, with silver houdahs, in which sat the first men of the ancient Mogul empire, richly dressed, decked with jewels, and wearing a Kashmir shawl, thrown like a toga over the right shoulder, bowing with great reverence to Lord Ellenborough, and, touching their forehead with their right hand, thus saluting us with their salam...

### Arrival of the Rajas

...the arrival of several Indian princes, who came from a great distance, with their court and their troops, to pay their respects to the Governor-General. Their arrival was announced by salutes, such as are due to reigning princes,



from the bulwarks of Delhi. We have already the Rajah of Bhurtpoor, with 5000 men; the Rao Rajah of Alwar, with 4000 men; the Rajah of Bickaneer, with 10,000 men; the Raja of Dhoolpoor, with 5000 men; the Rajah of Shapoorah, with 600 men. The Rajah of Jeypoor would have greeted the Governor-General in person, but, he imagines that he should lower himself, if he were to come to Delhi, because he considers the King of Delhi as of inferior descent, and thinks that the latter might, perhaps, fancy that the visit was intended for him.

The camps of these rajahs are all pitched on the field of ruins, and present the most singular and motley scene of Indian manners and customs. Journeys of this kind, which the princes undertake with great numbers of servants and cattle, sometimes exhaust their pecuniary resources, and they are obliged to remain stationary for several months after, or else to borrow money at high interest, whereby their subjects are afterwards the more oppressed.

The Rajah of Bickaneer appeared on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February: he was the first who came to our camp to attend the Durbar. His family, a younger branch of the house of Joudpoor, is one of the most ancient in India, and, as the Rajah informed us, was driven with its tribe, consisting of above 90,000 persons, by the Moguls from the fertile plains of the Jumna into the wilderness. His country is, indeed, 18,059 square miles in extent, but it contains only half a million of inhabitants. The revenues amount to more than thirty lacs, of which, however, only five lacs come to the Rajah's share, while the chiefs and Jaghidars receive the rest. His force consists of about 2000 cavalry, 8000 infantry, and 35 pieces of cannon.

The situation of his country, which lies on the border, and in the interior of the great Indian desert, the nature of the soil, where water fit to drink cannot be obtained at less than 200 or 300 feet below the surface, have protected it from the incursions of the Mahrattas; but, on the other hand, the Rajah has often been brought into difficulties by his rebellious subjects, particularly by the predatory Takoors. Rajah Kour Rattan Singh had been three months upon the journey, attended by 10,000 men, of whom 2000 were armed.

The entry of his Highness had a rather antique appearance, but it was very mean. His suwars, mounted on camels, rode on before; he was carried in a richly-gilt takt-i-rawan attended by his son and successor, his brother and nephew, twenty-two barons, twenty-two ministers and chief officers, and several hundred men armed with lances, shields, and swords. The Rajah and his attendants were all dressed in full white robes, and wore red conical turbans; they carried a shield on their backs, and sabres in their hands. The appearance very much resembled the pictorial representations of the ancient Egyptians.

The Rajah, who, conformably with the ancient Indian etiquette, had been well instructed in the paces of the elephant, entered the tent with this heavy



step, and was received by Lord Ellenborough, who shook him cordially by the hand. His Highness was free, communicative, and animated in conversation. His minister took the liberty, in describing the dominions of his sovereign, to make some witty remarks on its natural poverty and desolation, at which the Rajah smiled. "We have," said he, "neither lions nor tigers, because water is scarce, only hares and feathered game, and after a continuance of rain, wild boars; but rain is as scarce with us as gold!" His Highness left us in the course of half an hour, loaded with rich presents.

Soon afterwards the Rajah of Bhurtpoor appeared, on a handsome, splendidly adorned and painted elephant, on whose head was a golden peacock. He was preceded by his suwars on camels; then came his horses, coaches, and his palanquins; his relations, sirdars, and principal officers were mounted on elephants; his troops were partly on horseback and partly on foot. His Highness has been educated under the care of the English; he is only twenty-five years of age, tall and robust, but, he is disfigured by the small pox, and has no advantages of person; he has, however, the virtues which distinguish a good Indian prince, among which that of gratitude to his benefactors, the English government, is not wanting. This young Rajah was dressed in a long blue silk robe, trimmed with gold lace, and richly adorned with jewels; his two cousins wore green silk, his nineteen barons and ministers were arrayed in divers-coloured garments. As the Rajah is naturally very reserved and silent, his visit was but short; the presents were brought, ottar or roses was distributed, and he took his departure...

### **Raja of Alwar**

Though the Rajah [of Alwar] has only a revenue of ten lacs, there was nearly as much splendour in his procession as in that of the Rajah of Bhurtpoor, and his suite was not inferior, for he was accompanied by thirty of his captains, officers, and ministers. The conversation between him and the Governor-General lasted full half an hour. He spoke of his journey, and of his country, and, on receiving his presents, repeatedly expressed his joy at being so liberally supplied with arms.

### **Rajah of Shapoorah**

After him came the Rajah of Shapoorah, a branch of the house of Odeypoor, whose possessions are partly in this state and partly in the British territory; his equipage was very simple, for his revenue is only one lac; he was in a takt-i-rawan, and his attendants on foot and on horseback...









## **Parsees, Christians**

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- A. The Parsees**
- B. The Christians**

### **A. THE PARSEES**

#### **1. Character of the Parsees, Viscount George Valentia<sup>1</sup>**

From the length of time which Bombay has been under the control of Europeans, the Parsees, since their arrival there, have adopted little of the Asiatic manners. They indeed wear the dress, which they informed me had been adopted on their arrival, but they eat and drink like the English. Ardiseer Dady, one of their richest members, gave me a most magnificent entertainment. The table for the Europeans was chiefly covered with English cookery, but they sent me from their own several dishes, which were very highly seasoned, and good. The wines were excellent; but when I adjourned to their table, I was not a little astonished to find liqueurs placed opposite each Parsee, which they drank in glasses as freely as wine, and which, though they sat late, seemed to have no effect on them. Their houses are furnished with a profusion of English looking-glasses, prints, and paintings. They always light them up remarkably well; but on this occasion the whole gardens were illuminated with torches and lamps, which had a most brilliant effect. The band playing in the verandah, and the crowd of differently dressed people had the semblance of an English masquerade. We had a very good set of nautch-girls, which much pleased Sir James Mackintosh, who had not before seen this Asiatic amusement. Coffee and tea, pawn and attar, lavender water, and other perfumes, completed the melange of this Anglo-Asiatic entertainment, from which we departed about midnight.

To the credit of the Parsee humanity, they provide for all their poor; and to the credit of their private morals, there is not a single prostitute, or mistress to a gentleman, of their cast, in the settlement. They are generous



and splendid in the higher orders; and in the lower, active and intelligent, far surpassing as servants the Mussulmauns or Hindoos. They mostly speak English with propriety. In their persons they are a handsome race, fairer than the natives, though not possessing the clear skin of the Europeans. In their manners they are uniformly conciliatory and mild. I confess that I infinitely prefer them to any race of people in the East subject to the British control. They have numerous temples to Fire but their priests seem to have no authority in temporal concerns, nor much spiritual control. Their religion is tolerant, and, as far as it throws no impediment in the way of the public service, must be considered politically as a good one.

## **2. Parsees in British India, Maria Graham<sup>2</sup>**

The Parsees in British India enjoy every privilege, civil and religious. They are governed by their own *panchait*, or village council. The word *panchait* literally means a council of five, but that of the Guebres in Bombay consists of thirteen of the principal merchants of the sect; these were chosen originally by the people, confirmed by the government, and have continued hereditary. This little council decides all questions of property, subject, however, to an appeal to the recorder's court; but an appeal seldom happens, as the *panchait* is jealous of its authority, and is consequently cautious in its decisions. It superintends all marriages and adoptions, and inquires into the state of every individual of the community; its members would think themselves disgraced if any Parsee were to receive assistance from a person of a different faith; accordingly, as soon as the children of a poor man are old enough to marry, which, in conformity to the Hindoo custom, is at five or six years of age, the chief merchants subscribe a sufficient sum to portion the child; in cases of sickness, they support the individual or the family, and maintain all the widows and fatherless.

The *panchait* consists both of dustoors and laymen; all religious ceremonies and festivals come under its cognizance, together with the care of the temples, the adjusting the almanack, and the subsistence and life of the dogs. I could not learn with certainty the origin of the extreme veneration of the Parsees for this animal; every morning the rich merchants employ koolis to go round the streets with baskets of provision for the wild dogs; and, when a Parsee is dying, he must have a dog in his chamber to fix his closing eyes upon. Some believe that the dog guards the soul, at the moment of its separation from the body, from the evil spirits; others say that the veneration for the dogs is peculiar to the Indian Guebres, and that it arose from their having been saved from shipwreck in their emigration to India, by the barking of the dogs announcing their approach to the land in a dark night.



The Parsees use some solemnities when they name their children, which is done at five or six months old; when the muslin shirt is put on the first time, a sacred fire is lighted, prayers are repeated, and the name is given. Since their intercourse with Europeans, they persist in calling this ceremony christening, because it is performed when the first or proper name is given; the second name is a patronymic; thus, Norozejee Jumsheedjee, is Norozejee the son of Jumsheedjee.

The Parsees are the richest individuals on this side of India, and most of the great merchants are partners in British commercial houses. They have generally two or three fine houses, besides those they let to the English; they keep a number of carriages and horses, which they lend willingly not only to Europeans, but to their own poor relations, whom they always support. They often give dinners to the English gentlemen, and drink a great deal of wine, particularly Madeira. The Guebre women enjoy more freedom than other oriental females, but they have not yet thought of cultivating their minds. Perhaps this is owing in great measure to the early marriages which, in compliance with the Hindoo customs, they contract. By becoming the property of their husbands in their infancy, they never think of acquiring a further share of their affection, and, with the hope of pleasing, one great incitement to mental improvement is cut off.

### **3. Parsee Women, Anna Harriette Leonowens<sup>3</sup>**

The Parsee women that I met and visited in Bombay were on the whole, remarkably good-looking as girls; before they conceal their fine curly hair they are really beautiful, and the children among the loveliest and happiest to be found in the East.

The women are fair-complexioned, with a delicate brunette tinge, with large eyes and regular features, often exquisitely formed, owing to their dress being free from anything like pressure on the body; but they rob themselves of a part of their beauty by the custom of concealing their beautiful hair under white linen bands bound around the brow. They wear very wide silk trousers, gathered and fastened at the ankles, over this a silk tunic, often descending in graceful folds to the feet and bound at the waist, while a deep, wide scarf of silk or some other light texture gracefully drapes the whole person and serves at once the double purpose of a head-dress and a veil.

They occupy in their homes a much more honourable position than either the Hindoo or Moslem women. I used to meet them in the streets and bazaars, driving in their open carriages, surrounded by their bright, happy-looking children...

The Parsee woman is as independent in her home and marriage relations as the European, although the universal seclusion of high-born Hindoo and



Mohammedan woman has not been without its influence on her domestic life. The first use of the veil among the Persian women was as a symbol of dignity and honour rather than of concealment from motives of modesty. In the early days of the Zoroastrians woman was held not so much as an equal, but as something superior in the home. In social rights and home-duties the husband and wife shared alike, and side by side they ministered to the holy fires on their household hearths....

[T]here are among the Parsees even to-day a few old fashioned observances which might be introduced with great advantage to the wife and mother among the labouring and even richer classes of European nations. For instance, even in the poorest families there are certain days when the woman is considered unfit to cook, wash, bake, sweep the floor, or light the house lamp. So strenuous are the laws against her working at these times that among certain persons her touch is held to pollute the things or person that comes into close contact with her. She is forbidden to perform even the lighter offices which may fall to her share in the house. She separates herself from the family on such occasions. If she is too poor to keep a servant, her husband is enjoined to do her part of the housework in addition to his own outdoor labour, whatever that may be. The same rules apply to all female servants.

## B. THE CHRISTIANS

### 1. **Mr. Wrede's account of Syrian Christians, who contrary to Portuguese belief, followed the doctrine of Nestorius, and acknowledged the Patriarch of that sect residing in Syria, as their ecclesiastical chief<sup>4</sup>**

Their number must have been very considerable in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese became first acquainted with them; since they possessed about one hundred and ten churches in the countries now subject to the Travencore and Cochin rajahs and at this present time, after the manifold persecutions, oppressions and successive revolutions that have almost depopulated the whole coast, they are computed to amount to no less than one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

They are indiscriminately called St. Thome Christians, Nestorians, Syrians, and sometimes the Malabar Christians of the mountains, by the Portuguese writers of that time, and by the sub-sequent missionaries from Rome. The most common name given to them by the Hindoos of the country is that of *Nazaranee*, *Ma-pila* and more frequently *Surians*, or *Surianée Mapila*.

The Portuguese were fond of bestowing upon them the name of St. Thome Christians, though this appellation does not appear to have been, or now to



be, very common amongst themselves. It originates probably from the chief who settled the first colony of Syrians on the coast, and who was, according to their tradition, their first bishop; and founder of their religion in these countries; and whose name was MAR THOME. 'This is corroborated by the curious circumstance of their giving the name of MAR THOME to every ecclesiastical chief, or bishop of theirs, although his real name be JOSEPH or ABRABAM; not improbably in compliment to their first bishop and founder, for whom they have still a religious veneration. His arrival and settlement on the coast, may perhaps at a future period be ascertained, with historical accuracy, to have taken place during the violent persecution of the sect of NESTORIUS under THEODOSIUS the Second, or some time after. But the bigotted Portuguese missionaries laid hold of this name to renew the story of the arrival of ST. THOMAS the Apostle in India; who they pretended had converted a great number of idolaters on the coast of Malabar, and afterwards on the other side of India, as far as *Malliapoor*; now *St. Thome*, where he suffered martyrdom.

All traditions and Malabar records agree, that the Syrian Christians, or Nazaranee Mapilas, were known, and had been settled on the Malabar coast long before either the Arabs or Jews. In the Malabar histories, the first mention of a Syrian colony of the Christians is made in the reign of COCOORANGON PERUMAL, who probably lived in the sixth century; a wealthy Syrian merchant, of the name of THOME CANNANES, is said to have landed at *Oranganore*, where he was received, and induced to settle, by great privileges granted to him by the PERUMAL. He afterwards married two wives; one of the *Nair*; and one of some low caste; by whom he had a very numerous progeny, who after his death had great disputes about his inheritance.

We find again mention made of two Syrian, or Chaldaean bishops, at *Coilan*, or *Quilone*, about one hundred years after its foundation; where they were extremely well received by the rajah, and permitted to build a church, which was still extant when CABRAL first visited Quilone. The grants and privileges which they received from the rajah were engraved upon copper plates; which many centuries afterwards, were shewn to Archbishop de Menezes at *Tevalacaree*.

If one adds to these historical dates the name of Syrians retained by the St. Thome Christians, their distinct features, and complexion somewhat fairer than the rest of the Malabars, the style of their building, especially any their churches; but, above all, the general use of the Syrian, or rather Chaldaean language, which is still preserved in all their religious functions, even in those churches which have since embraced the Roman rite, and that to this day they take their Christian and family names from the Syrian or Chaldaean idiom, no doubt can remain but that the St. Thome Christians are originally a colony of



*Nestorians*, who fled from the dominion of the Greek emperors, after THEODOSIUS the second began to persecute the followers of the sect.

They made at first some proselytes among the brahmins and Nairs, and were on that account much respected by the native princes; so that even at present they consider themselves equal in rank to either of the above two castes. They are in fact in much greater estimation among the Hindoos than the Christians converted by the Portuguese, and mostly picked up from the lowest caste. Many of the St. Thome Christians now preserve the manners and mode of life of the brahmins as to cleanliness, and abstaining from animal food....

They all wore swords and targets, and some of them had firelocks; they were great marksmen, and from their eighth year frequented the firing schools: husbandry and trade were their principal occupations, and, next to the brahmins, the St. Thome Christians furnished the greatest quantity of pepper to the Portuguese.

As to their religious tenets, they followed generally the doctrine of NESTORIUS. They admitted no images of saints in their churches, where the Holy Cross alone was to be seen. They had only three sacraments, baptism, eucharist, and the orders; and would not admit transubstantiation in the manner the Roman Catholics do. They knew nothing of purgatory; and the saints they said were not admitted to the presence of GOD, but were kept in a third place till the day of judgment. Their priests were permitted to marry, at least once in their life. Their rite was the Chaldaean or Syrian....

The uncontrolled power of Papal Rome had not then reached the Syrian churches in Travencore: they preserved their independence, and remained for ages unmolested, until the maritime discovery of India by de Gama: after which, priests and inquisitors from Goa disturbed their peace, burnt their unadulterated versions of the sacred scriptures, and compelled many of their churches to acknowledge the pope's supremacy.

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## **Muslims in India**

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- A. Some observations**
- B. Muslim Rulers**
- C. Muslim Women**

### **A. SOME OBSERVATIONS**

#### **1. Two categories of Moors, Robert Orme<sup>1</sup>**

The Moors of Indostan may be divided into two kinds of people, differing in every respect, excepting in the profession of the same religion. Under the first are reckoned the descendants of the conquerors; Tartars continually naturalizing themselves in Indostan, through the encouragement which their martial spirit is sure to receive; Arabians and Persians who have quitted their own, to seek their fortunes in this country. The second rank of Moors comprehends all the descendants of converted Gentoos – a miserable race, as none but the most miserable of the Gentoos casts are capable of changing their religion.

The Tartars are known amongst themselves to be of honest and simple manners; and if at times fierce and cruel, they cease to be so when they cease to be enemies of war.

The conquest of Indostan was made by them with little difficulty, and has since been maintained with less: a distinction of religions (that of Mahomed, and that of the Gentoos) has ensued, whilst the conqueror may without control vaunt his own, and insult that of the subject; the subject, by being more numerous has only become more despicable, from this proof of not daring to exert his strength. Almost the whole wealth of this vast territory is divided amongst the Moors, the effect of their tenaciousness in keeping all offices of the government amongst themselves. The principle of the government has nevertheless reduced all these mighty lords to be as much the slaves to some powers, as others are slaves to theirs. A licentiousness and luxury peculiar



to this enervating climate, have spread their corruption, and instead of meeting with obstacles from laws or opinions, is cherished as the supreme good to the utmost excesses.

All these will surely be deemed causes sufficient to have changed, in the present Moors of Indostan, the spirit which their ancestors brought with them into it: and from hence many and dreadful vices are now naturalized amongst them.

A domineering insolence towards all who are in subjection to them, ungovernable willfulness, inhumanity, cruelty, murders and assassinations, deliberated with the same calmness and subtlety as the rest of their politics, an insensibility to remorse for these crimes, which are scarcely considered otherwise than as necessary accidents in the course of life, sensual excesses which revolt against nature, unbounded thirst of power, and an expaciousness of wealth equal to the extravagance of his propensities and vices – this is the character of an Indian Moor, who is of consequence sufficient to have any character at all...

## **2. Politeness and ceremonies of the Moors, Robert Orme<sup>2</sup>**

...We find, therefore, amongst the Moors, the ceremonies of outward manners carried to a more refined pitch than in any other part of the world, excepting China. These manners are become a fundamental of their education, as without them a man would, instead of making his fortune, be liable to lose his head.

An uncivil thing is never said amongst equals: the most extravagant adulation, both of gesture and words, is lavished upon the superior. The grandee is seated in his Durbar, where all who approach to pay their respects are ranged according to their respective degrees of station or favour. All is attention to his countenance: if he asks a question, it is answered with the turn that will please him: if he asserts, all applaud the truth: does he contradict, all tremble: a multitude of domesticks appear in waiting, as silent and immovable as statues. This is the ceremonial of paying court. I speak not of the Durbar as the tribunal of justice: there injuries must cry aloud, or will not be heard...

## **3. Muslim ostentation, a factor of indigence, Father Wendel<sup>3</sup>**

It should...be noted that this vogue, or rather vice, of cutting a great figure by the splendour of great expenditure is one of the contagions which the Moors or Mohammedans have introduced to and spread throughout Hindustan. The Mohammedans are accustomed to eating and attiring themselves well, of being voluptuous and debauched at the same time as they love idleness and indolence. Arrogance and haughtiness being their nature, they attempt only to appear grand and glorious outwardly. This imaginary grandeur results usually in greater outlay than they have revenue. Most



frequently, the children of these *amirs* finish their days as *faqirs*, or mendicants; nor must one go farther in their families to their grandchildren to see this borne out, to whom rarely their riches have the good fortune to arrive.

#### 4. The Moplahs, James Forbes<sup>4</sup>

About a fourth part of the inhabitants of Malabar are Moplahs, or Mahomendans, descended from the Moors and Arabians, who have settled there at different times, and married Malabar women: they are the principal merchants in the country, both for foreign and home trade: many are proprietors of trading vessels, navigated by Mahomedan commanders and seamen, in which they make an annual voyage to the Persian and Arabian Gulfs; and after disposing of pepper, cassia, cardamoms, cotton-cloth coir-ropes, and other productions of Malabar, they return with coffee, drugs, dates, and dried fruits. Those on the sea-coast use a corrupt language between the Arabic and Malabar: the Koran and the few books they possess are written in Arabic. The Moplahs engaged in commerce, and enjoying an intercourse with other people, are tolerably courteous and orderly; these in the interior, who are too proud to work or engage in agricultural pursuits, are generally an idle worthless race; parading about the country with a broadsword, or murdering time, in one of the swings already mentioned. These are of a most turbulent revengeful spirit, prone to mischief, especially against the Nairs, whom they consider as infidels, proud and haughty as themselves. When intoxicated with bhang, or opium, they frequently run *amuck*, and in a dreadful state of phrenzy, murder every person they meet, until they are overpowered and destroyed.

The Nairs are at constant variance with the Moplahs; and the king of Travencore, jealous of their ambitious revengeful temper, keeps them in great subjection, and levies frequent contributions on their property; to which they reluctantly submit, from knowing they would experience the same treatment from other governments.

#### 5. Religion mixes itself with their lives, Bishop Heber<sup>5</sup>

I cannot help admiring in the Mussulmans the manner in which their religion apparently mixes itself with every action of their lives; and though it is but too true that all this has a tendency to degenerate into mere form or cant, or even profanation of holy things, for the constant use of God's name in the manner in which some of them use it, scarcely differs from swearing, it might be well if Christians learned from them to keep their faith and hope more continually in their minds, and more frequently on their lips than the greater number of them do. Above all, it seems to be an error, particularly in a heathen country, to act as if we were ashamed of our religion, to watch the servants out of the room before we kneel down to our prayers, or to dissemble in secular matters the hope and trust which we really feel in Providence.



**6. The Boras, Bishop Heber<sup>6</sup>**

We went thirteen miles more to a village called Tekaria, where we re-entered the Company's territory. The country still, and, indeed all the way to Broach, was chiefly cultivated with cotton, the roads very bad, and worn into deep ruts, the trees less tall, spreading, and numerous than we had been accustomed to see...

The Tussildar and his assistant were old men of the Mahommedan sect of Boras, and, whether justly so or no, seemed regarded as usurers and oppressors by the people under their care. The Boras in general are unpopular, and held in the same estimation for parsimony that the Jews are in England.

**7. The Muslims of Calcutta, Rev. James Long<sup>7</sup>**

The Mussulmans of Calcutta though adopting various Hindu practices, have never amalgamated with the Hindus. They seem to retain towards them the views of Timur who said, – 'The Hindu has nothing of humanity but the figure.' Ambitions characterized the Moslem here last century as much as avarice did the Gentoo, but the days are gone for ever when a Mussulamn like the Foudar of Hooghly had Rs. 6000 monthly salary and when the *kora* or the whip was hung up in every Mofussil Court for the Mussulman officials to flagellate the Hindus. In 1804 the Muslims of Calcutta memorialized the Marquis Wellesley because a thesis was proposed at Fort William College 'on the utility of translations into the vernacular of works on different religions.' But they are in the script and in yellow leaf and even Tippu was obliged to employ Hindus in the revenue as he lost so much by the ignorance of Moslem revenue officers.

**8. The Mohammedans belong to one great family, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>8</sup>**

The Mahometans of India, both in the army and in towns and villages under the British dominion, as well as those of foreign states, are every where the same. They belong to one great family, united by the same religion and the same interests, and will always be ready to defend their national cause with their services and their money. Religion and government are never divided in the mind of the Mahometan, and he will never forget that his supremacy in India has been totally overturned by the English.

The eyes of the whole Mahometan population of India will be turned upon him who preaches a crusade against the infidels, and the result will be followed and supported with as much anxious expectation and interest in the remotest village of the Deccan, as in Calcutta or Delhi. Symptoms of such a disposition have frequently appeared, even in the army. Yet it is difficult to determine the impression which it would make on the Mahometans in the ranks of the British army. They are more observed by their officers and their Hindoo



comrades, than the inhabitants of the towns can be, and we may be certain that they would be the last of the Mahometan population, to join in any such movements.

At present this is not to be apprehended, nay, it is almost impossible that a general rising of the Mahometans in India can take place; they have lost all hopes of it; and if the Mahometan does not acknowledge it, yet he feels most sensibly that there is now no existing power to which he could attach himself.

## **B. MUSLIM RULERS**

### **MUGHAL EMPERORS**

#### **1. Shah Alam, Thomas Twining<sup>9</sup>**

At the edge of the carpet I took off my sandals...advanced alone a little beyond the first line of persons sitting, and turning to my right, when half way between the two lines I saw the Emperor immediately before me at the farther extremity of the lines. He was sitting, with his face towards the terrace, upon a low tukkt or throne, covered with crimson velvet or silk, and was surrounded by numerous persons standing, some behind him in the divan, others along the corridor on each side....

Though seventy-one years of age, he looked the tallest and stoutest of all present. Though prepared to see him blind, as he was, the appearance of the Great Mogol upon his throne in such a situation was an extraordinary and most distressing spectacle, especially as his affliction did not proceed from accident, nor arise in the course of nature, but resulted from an act of most inhuman barbarity committed by one of his subjects. There was, however, nothing repulsive in the Emperor's appearance, nothing being perceptible but a depression of the eyelids....

#### **2. Akbar II, Bishop Heber<sup>10</sup>**

The 31<sup>st</sup> December was fixed for my presentation to the Emperor, which was appointed for half-past eight in the morning. Lushington and a Captain Wade also chose to take the same opportunity. At eight I went, accompanied by Mr. Elliot, with nearly the same formalities as at Lucknow, except that we were on elephants instead of in palanquins, and that the procession was perhaps, less splendid, and the beggars both less numerous and far less vociferous and importunate. We were received with presented arms by the troops of the palace drawn up within the barbican, and proceeded, still on our elephants, through the noblest gateway and vestibule which I ever saw. It consists, not merely of a splendid gothic arch in the center of the great gate-tower, – but, after that, of a long vaulted aisle, like that of a gothic cathedral, with a small, open octagonal



court in its center, all of granite, and all finely carved with inscriptions from the Koran, and with flowers. This ended in a ruinous and exceedingly dirty stable-yard! where we were received by Captain Grant, as the Mogul's officer on guard, and by a number of elderly men with large gold-headed canes, the usual ensign of office here, and one of which Mr. Elliot also carried. We were now told to dismount and proceed on foot, a task which the late rain made inconvenient to my gown and cassock, and thin shoes, and during which we were pestered by a fresh swarm of miserable beggars, the wives and children of the stable servants. After this we passed another richly-carved, but ruinous and dirty gateway, where our guides, withdrawing a canvas screen, called out, in a sort of harsh chaunt, "Lo, the ornament of the world! Lo, the asylum of the nations! King of Kings! The Emperor Acbar Shah! Just, fortunate, victorious!" We saw, in fact, a very handsome and striking court, about as big as that All Souls, with low, but richly-ornamented buildings. Opposite to us was a beautiful open pavilion of white marble, richly carved, flanked by rose bushes and fountains, and some tapestry and striped curtains hanging in festoons about it, within which was a crowd of people, and the poor old descendant of Tamer-lane seated in the midst of them. Mr. Elliott here bowed three times very low, in which we followed his example. This ceremony was repeated twice as we advanced up the steps of the pavilion, the heralds each time repeating the same expressions about their master's greatness. We then stood in a row on the right-hand side of the throne, which is a sort of marble bedstead richly ornamented with gilding, and raised on two or three steps. Mr. Elliott then stepped forwards, and, with joined hands in the usual eastern way, announced, in a low voice, to the emperor, who I was. I then advanced, bowed three times again, and offered a nuzzur of fifty-one gold mohurs in an embroidered purse, laid on my handkerchief, in the way practiced by the Baboos in Calcutta. This was received and laid on one side, and I remained standing for a few minutes, while the usual court questions about my health, my travells, when I left Calcutta, &c. were asked. I had thus an opportunity of seeing the old gentleman more plainly. He has a pale, thin, but handsome face, with an aquiline nose and a long white beard. His complexion is little if at all darker than that of an European. His hands are very fair and delicate, and he had some valuable-looking rings on them. His hands and face were all I saw of him, for the morning, being cold, he was so wrapped up in shawls, that he reminded me extremely of the Druid's head on a Welch halfpenny. I then stepped back to my former place, and returned again with five more mohurs to make my offerings to the heir apparent, who stood at his father's left hand, the right being occupied by the Resident. Next, my two companions were introduced with nearly the same forms, except that their offerings were less, and that the Emperor did not speak to them.

The Emperor then beckoned to me to come forwards, and Mr. Elliott



told me to take off my hat, which had till now remained on my head, on which the Emperor tied a flimsy turban of brocade round my head with his own hands, for which, however, I paid four gold mohurs more. We were then directed to retire to receive the "Khelats" (honorary dresses) which the bounty of "the Asylum of the World" had provided for us. I was accordingly taken into a small private room, adjoining the Zennanah, where I found a handsome flowered caftan edged with fur, and pair of common-looking shawls, which my servants, who had the delight of witnessing all this fine show, put on instead of my gown, my cassock remaining as before. In this strange dress I had to walk back again, having my name announced by the criers (something in the same way that Lord Marmion's was) as "Bahadur Boozoony, Dowlut-mund," &c. to the presence, where I found my two companions who had not been honoured by a private dressing room, but had their Khelats put on them in the gateway of the court. They were, I apprehend, still queerer figures than I was, having their hats wrapped with scarfs of flowered gauze, and a strange garment of gauze, tinsel, and faded ribbands flung over their shoulders above their coats. I now again came forward and offered my third present to the Emperor, being a copy of the Arabic Bible and the Hindoostanee Common prayer, handsomely bound in blue velvet laced with gold, and wrapped up in a piece of brocade. He then motioned to me to stoop, and put a string of pearls round my neck, and two glittering but not costly ornaments in the front of my turban, for which I again offered five gold mohurs. It was, lastly, announced that a horse was waiting for my acceptance, at which fresh instance of imperial munificence the heralds again made a proclamation of largesse, and I again paid five gold mohurs. It ended by my taking my leave with three time salams, making up, I think the sum of about threescore, and I retired with Mr. Elliott to my dressing-room, whence I sent to her Majesty the *Queen*, as she is generally called, though Empress would be the ancient and more proper title, a present of five mohurs more, and the Emperor's chobdars came eagerly up to know when they should attend to receive their bukshish. It must not, however, be supposed that this interchange of civilities was very expensive either to his Majesty or to me. All the presents which he gave, the horse included, though really the handsomest which had been seen at the court of Delhi for many years, and though the old gentleman evidently intended to be extremely civil, were not, worth much more than 300 s. rupees, so that he and his family gained at least 800 s. rupees by the morning's work, besides what he received from my two companions, which was all clear gain, since the Khelats which they got in return were only fit for May-day, and made up, I fancy, from the cast-off finery of the Begum. On the other hand, since the Company have wisely ordered that all the presents given by native Princes to Europeans should be disposed of on the Government account, they have liberally, at the same time, taken on themselves the expense of paying the usual money nuzzurs made by



public men on these occasions. In consequence none of my offerings were at my own charge, except the professional and private one of the two books, with which, as they were unexpected, the Emperor, as I was told, was very much pleased.

I had, of course, several bukshishes to give afterwards to his servants, but these fell considerably short of my expenses at Lucknow. To return to the hall of audience. While in the small apartment, where I got rid of my shining garments, I was struck with its beautiful ornaments. It was entirely lined with white marble, inlaid with flowers and leaves of green serpentine, lapis lazuli, and blue and red porphyry; the flowers were of the best Italian style of workmanship, and evidently the labour of an artist of that country. All, however, was dirty, desolate, and forlorn. Half the flowers and leaves had been picked out or otherwise defaced, and the doors and windows were in a state of dilapidation, while a quantity of old furniture was piled in one corner, and a torn hanging of faded tapestry hung over an archway which led to the interior apartments...

### **The Emperor**

Achbar Shah has the appearance of a man of seventy-four or seventy-five; he is, however, not much turned of sixty-three, but, in this country, that is a great age. He is said to be a very good-tempered, mild, old man, of moderate talents, but polished and pleasing manners. His favourite wife, the Begum, is a low-born, low-bred, and violent woman, who rules him completely, lays hold on all his money, and has often influenced him to very unwise conduct towards his children, and the British Government. She hates her eldest son, who is, however, a respectable man, of more talents than native princes usually shew, and happily for himself, has a predilection for those literary pursuits which are almost the only laudable or innocent objects of ambition in his power. He is fond of poetry, and is himself a very tolerable Persian poet. He has taken some pains in the education of his children, and, what in this country is very unusual, even of his daughters. He too, however, though not more than thirty-five, is prematurely old, arising partly from the early excesses into which the wretched follies of an Eastern court usually plunge persons in his situation, – and partly from his own subsequent indulgence in strong liquors. His face is bloated and pimpled, his eyes weak, and his hand tremulous. Yet, for an Eastern prince, as I have already observed, his character is good, and his abilities considered as above the common run.

### **3. Bahadur Shah II, Captain Leopold von Orlich<sup>11</sup>**

The present king (whose title is Abul Mozuffer Sarajuddyn Mahomed Bahadur Shah Badsha-i-Ghazie) is the mere shadow of a prince, and has lost the affection of his people by his dissolute life and his quarrelsome temper; he is not on good terms with his family, and is constantly at variance with his



ministers...

To the great regret of his family, the King, who is in his sixty-ninth year, contracted a new marriage a few months ago, and lately had much correspondence with Scindia, as he is very anxious that he should send him a physician who, as his Majesty expresses it, possesses the invaluable art of exciting an appetite, who may enable a person to consume twenty pounds of provisions in a day! It was still uncertain whether the Rajah of Gwalior will spare this wonderful man for any time...

#### 4. The Nawab of Awadh

##### January 1<sup>st</sup> 1838. Gifts by Heir-apparent, Fanny Eden<sup>12</sup>

Oude is the greatest independent kingdom next to Runjeet Singh's, and certainly in their own way the natives are magnificent people – their magnificence running entirely to shew and precious stones. Besides fifteen trays of shawls to each of us, pearl and emerald necklaces and diamond combs, there were two sets of ear-rings, each ear-ring made of a single diamond with a single emerald drop that were too beautiful, and the presents to George were of course still more splendid. Most of them will probably be given to Runjeet Singh when we meet him. The rest of them will be sold – when I can spend a few thousand pounds for you very advantageously....

We had another breakfast at the Palace which is a very *Arabian Nights* looking building – the throne is worth £250,000 – all the pillars supporting it studded with rubies and the fringes round the canopy pearls and emeralds...

In the evening we had to go to the Palace again to see some fireworks. Nobody but ourselves, Macnaghten who came over to act ambassador, Col. Lowe at whose house we were staying, the Orange baby, the Oude family (for 'Oude and we are very familiar') and about eighteen brothers of them and sons in proportion, all remarkably happy in the shape of their turbans. There was written up in letters of fire 'God save Lord Auckland Governor-General of India', 'God save the King of Oude and Col. John Lowe resident of Lucknow'. I was particularly taken by the sublimity of that...But it was altogether a striking looking scene, the banks of the river were illuminated, the fire works were let off from the water and boats full of nautch girls and jugglers in their splendid dresses were lighted up in front.

We went next day to see some of the King's garden palaces. One is beautiful, of inlaid marble, fountains playing in all the rooms and the garden full of flowers – orange trees covered with ripe oranges and parroquets flying about in flocks. The ladies' apartments are always melancholy-looking – built up by high walls...The city is full of beautiful mosques and buildings. One of the palaces we saw had just been pulled down and rebuilt because one of the last King's three hundred wives had died there – another had poisoned herself finding he had grown tired of her. He was only 35 years old when he died this



year and seems to have been quite mad from folly.

Having the power of life and death over his subjects it happily did not take the turn of extreme cruelty. He only now and then put them in prison without any reason and took their property to help on one of his own whims. His chief amusement was dressing, and I saw an excellent sketch, not of him but of his train, done by a native. He heard that our Kings wore long trains at their coronations and so he had one made for himself, so long it extended through two or three rooms. There is a sketch he had done of the finest room in his palace with a long file of servants passing through it bearing part of his train, neither the end of it nor he himself appearing. When the Bishop was there he took a great fancy to his dress and suggested that he should make one like it. Think of the Bishop's horror. The English hair dresser he had taken into his service was in despair because at the King's death he was left in possession of eighteen wigs of different colours which the King had ordered for his own wear at one hundred guineas each.

There is one palace called the egg palace which looks at a distance exactly like a great white egg – he had it built because he wanted something peculiar. I did that from a native sketch of him in one of his carriages.

## C. MUSLIM WOMEN

### 1. A visit to the Royal Zenana at Bhuj, Anne Katherine Elwood<sup>13</sup>

[I will give you] a description of a Jahrejah's [a community who observed elements of both Hindu and Muslim faiths] Zenana at Bhooj, to which, by express invitation, I paid visit on the third of January 1826.

We were received on our arrival at the gates of the palace by Ruten Sie, who attended C. [her husband] and his staff (he then being in command of the cantonment) to the Rao's Durbar; whilst the ladies of the party were handed over to the women's attendants, by whom we were escorted through several courts, till we reached a flight of steps which led to an apartment, at the door of which, surrounded by her attendants, stood the Rannee, the wife of the ex, and the mother of the present Rao. She received us most courteously, and with as much grace as an English princess could have done. She was a pretty woman, with soft languishing eyes, very white teeth, and an agreeable and expressive countenance. Her costume was a handsome sarree, much worked with gold, and her arms, ankles, and throat were loaded with gorgeous bangles and necklaces of pure gold; a number of handsome pearls were in her hair, and massy rings in her nose and ears, but her ornaments were rather heavy than elegant, and more valuable than brilliant. After mutually exchanging salaams, she took her seat in a low silver armchair, supported by cushions, whilst common chairs were placed for us, and the attendants, dressed in the heavy



red sarree of the country, sat down on the ground, gazed at us with insatiate curiosity, and talked an immense deal, but respectfully.

The Zenana, of which so much has been said, and of which Burke, I think, gives so flowery and poetical a description, was a small dark apartment, with unglazed windows closed by wooden shutters. Its furniture consisted of a four-poster bed and a small couch – a very handsome carpet – the Rannee's silver chair – another of a similar description, probably for her lord and master, – and with our seats, the inventory is completed.

The manners of the Rannee were dignified, yet extremely soft, gracious, highly pleasing, and very superior to those of her attendants. Though from etiquette never allowed to leave her Zenana, yet she appeared quite *au fait* at all the gossip, and even scandal of the English camp, and seemed intimately acquainted with the particulars of a matrimonial *fracas* which had taken place there some time before. She put a number of questions to us, and after we had satisfied her curiosity, on our asking her whether she had any family, she told us she had one son (the young Rao), and, poor thing, it was with a melancholy sigh that she added, and 'two daughters, both dead.' Probably they had 'had milk given them,' the barbarous custom of the Jahrehjah tribe.

As I was not sufficient Hindoostanee scholar at this time to carry on the conversation fluently myself, my Ayah assisted as interpreter, and with all my respect for Majesty, it was with difficulty I kept my countenance, when, after hesitating a little at the English term for Rannee, she interpreted the dignity into 'Mrs. King'. On our receiving the summons from the gentlemen, 'Mrs. King' seemed duly impressed with the necessity of obeying the behests of a husband, and after presenting us with betel-nut wrapt up in a leaf, termed paung, inundating us with rose water, and pouring sandal-wood oil over us, we made our salaams and retired, she requesting us to repeat our visit *at least*, once a fortnight, and I flatter myself, that in the sameness and tedium of a Zenana life, we must indeed have been considerable amusement, and have afforded the fair inhabitants topics for conversation for a long time afterwards.

'Mrs. King', or the Rannee of Cutch, is said to be very much attached to her husband, and the ex-Rao Bharmuljee, notwithstanding he has three or four other wives; and she has even built a tomb to some relation whom he murdered, in expiation of the offence. She is very fond of narrating the particulars of his deposition to all those who will give her a patient hearing, which she considers as very hard and unjust, and, very naturally and properly, does all she can to procure him friends. She was, at this time, very anxious that her son should marry; for, to the disgrace of the family, he was ten years old, and had no wife! a circumstance which had never occurred to any of his predecessors before! and unfortunately, on account of the expenses, there seemed to be some difficulty in procuring him one.



## **2. Begum Samru, Victor Jacquemont<sup>14</sup>**

I seem to have forgotten last year to tell you about my visit to the Begum (the Persian for princess) Sumru at Sirdhana near Meerut. Know, then, that Colonel Arnold took me to see her one Sunday morning in December while I was with him at Meerut. I had breakfast and dinner with the old witch and even kissed her hand gallantly. At dinner I had the honour of clinking glasses with her like a regular John Bull. On returning to Meerut on the following day I received an invitation to dine with her on Christian Day. She is an old hussy quite a hundred years old, bent double and as shriveled as a dried raisin, a sort of walking mummy who still conducted all her own business, listening to two or three secretaries at a time, while dictating to three more. Not four years ago she had some of her wretched ministers and courtiers who had fallen into disgrace blown from the mouth of her cannon; they were simply fired off like bullets. This is a story (a true one) that at the age of sixty or eighty she had a young slave-girl of whom she was jealous buried alive, and held a nautch (ball) for her husband upon this horrible grave. Her two European husbands both died violent deaths. For the rest, she was as brave as she was cruel. Some Italian monks got hold of her and made her mortally scared of the devil. She built a fine Catholic church at Sirdhana, and has recently written to the Government requesting that, on her death, part of her domain may be permanently made over to her church to provide for its upkeep. She has written to the Pope asking for a bishop of Sirdhana; yet she is not in her dotage.

Out of her revenue of sixteen lakhs (four million) she buries eight every year in her gardens, though she could give them to anybody she likes and on her death they will become the property of the English Government.

## **3. Father Severin Noti, the German Jesuit, on the principality of Sardhana, ruled by Begum Samru<sup>15</sup>**

The fiefs under Moghul rule showed a certain resemblance to the feudal states of the Germanic tribes after the migration of nations, and played an important role when the central power of the Moghul Empire was beginning to shrink and needed the support of military forces. At that time the holder of a jaghir would gradually assume all sovereign rights inside the region and come to regard it as a hereditary fief. The same applied to Sumru's jaghir; because we know for certain that his widow exercised full jurisdiction, even over life and death. The holder of a jaghir was called jaghirdar, a name which may be considered the equivalent of "feudal baron". Thus, Sumru rose as high as being a baron. In actual fact, however, he rose even higher, for his jaghir quickly became known as the Principality of Sardhana, and his widow was always honoured with the title "Begum" by the English. Sumru a prince! All



due honour to the energetic craftsman from Strassburg! Whatever his character may have been – and it was often slandered or at any rate misjudged – his compatriots will not grudge him their admiration for his genius.

Sumru's fief, known as the Principality of Sardhana until the year 1836, was situated in what was called Doab, and stretched eastward from the Jumna nearly as far as the Ganges, from Muzaffarnagar in the North to the vicinity of Aligarh in the South. The annual revenue of the Principality amounted to 6 lakh rupees, 1,200,000 marks at the then rate of exchange....

Sumru was in his 58<sup>th</sup> year and fully engaged in the duties of his office as Governor of Agra, when the Angel of Death recalled him from the scene of his earthly career on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1778. His body was buried in the Catholic cemetery called Padritola or Padre Santo. Above his grave rises the beautiful mausoleum built to his memory by his mourning wife...

Sumru's only, but illegitimate, son was only fourteen years old – a retarded child – and already showing a strong inclination to vice. So he was plainly incapable of succeeding his father to the fief or to the brigade command. Therefore, the officers of the orphaned corps unanimously decided to request the Emperor to recognize the widow as successor. Yet Shah Allum, mindful of the services rendered by Sumru, wished to honour the deceased in his son; hence, he not only let the fief run on in the name of the youth but also granted him the honorary title of Nawab, so that the young Sumru appears in the later official records as Nawab, or Nawab Zaffar Khan. On the other hand, the mannish character of the dead man's widow was not unknown to the Shah; so he did not hesitate to comply with the officer's request to confirm the "Princess" as supreme brigade commander, as well as *de facto* holder of the fief as Begum Sumru. In this way, India – not without amazement – saw the ancient legend of the fighting Amazons come true. For more than half a century, this modern Penthesilea stood at the head of a small army. Not only was she a general but as Begum she also reigned over a small nation for no less than 58 years; she maintained a glittering court with an extensive civil and military administration and proved everywhere – though to a slightly lesser degree – the equal of her great contemporary, the Empress Catherine of Russia.

#### 4. The wife of Nawab of Junagarh, a 'Woman of business,' Marianne Postans<sup>16</sup>

Emerging from the verandah into the open court-yard, a slave conducted me up a flight of steps, into a room, fitted up to resemble a tent, and from thence into the apartments appropriated to the harem. The first, was a spacious hall, surrounded with lights but otherwise unfurnished, and from this, I was ushered upon a spacious terrace prepared for my reception. The floor was covered with fine scarlet cloth, and the low parapet was hung with Persian carpets. Chairs



were ranged along the center, and slaves bearing torches stood upon the edge of the carpet. The wives of his Highness [the Nawab of Junagarh] advanced to meet me, magnificently dressed, and blazing with innumerable jewels. Seating me upon the center chair, they drew the others round, and began to chat on various subjects, with great good nature, and much courteousness of manner. The principal wife, the Rahit Buckte, was good looking, and about four-and-twenty years of age; her manner was lively, her conversation unusually intelligent, and her round fat face irradiated with the good humour. The second lady, the Dosie Beebee, had the airs of a coquettish and spoilt beauty, her dark languishing eyes rendered still more attractive by a very judicious application of the radiance-giving Soormay, and her henna tinted, and delicate little feet, appearing to sustain with difficulty, the weight of her pearl-embroidered slippers. The Ameer Buckte was a staid person, richly dressed, but without any personal attractions, and the Beebee Bhoe, was absolutely frightful.

The ladies were attired in a similar costume, of Kincaub trowsers, tight at the ankle, a full, richly embroidered satin petticoat, with a little cholah or bodice, and a saree of coloured gauze, embroidered with gold flowers. Their glossy hair, simply braided across the forehead, was adorned with strings of fine pearl; about a dozen costly necklaces hung over the cholahs of each, and the ear-rings, toe-rings, nose-rings, bracelets, and anklets, were innumerable.

The Beebees had not, on my previous occasion, met a European lady, and they perplexed me with questions upon our manners and habits of passing time. They expressed particular interest about our fancy works, of which Mohammedan ladies are great admirers. The Rahit Buckte desired her slave girls to bring some cholahs of her own embroidering, which displayed great ingenuity, neatness and taste. After chatting for some time, I suggested the necessity of a return to my party, who I concluded were weary of the Nuwaub's method of shewing them attention. On this hint, pan suparree appeared, upon superbly chased silver trays, covered with crimson and purple velvet napkins, embroidered with gold, and edged with a deep gold fringe.

The usual quantity of dry suparree nut, pan leaves, and spice, having been deposited on my lap, and my luckless apparel deluged with sandal oil and rose water, each of the ladies threw a wreath of Mogree flowers on my neck, and pressed me to visit them on the following day, proposing to accompany me to the Nuwaub's favourite garden, at the foot of the Girnar.

Anxious of course to cultivate the acquaintance of my gentle friends, I readily acquiesced, and descending to join my party in Durbar, we all returned, gratified, and fatigued to the Serai.

The following morning at eleven, Sheik Mahmoud, the favourite Chelah [attendant] of his Highness, summoned me to the harem, and was accompanied by an attendant, laden with fine mangoes, as an offering from the Nuwaub. On entering the palace, I did not as before visit the public reception rooms, but was



received by the Rahit Buckte at the door of her own apartments. Her attire was little splendid than that worn in the evening, for the ladies of the east, only happy in being well attired, have not any nice distinctions between the fitness of particular toilettes; the ease, and simply beauty of a morning *deshabille*, which distinguishes our English taste, is unappreciated; and a mid-day sun, whose beams pierce the jealousies of an eastern harem, blazes on glittering jewels, which with us, are considered fit only for the glare of festal lamps.

Surrounded by slave girls, all chatting merrily together, and some with their infants in their arms, we proceeded through a suite of several apartments to the Beebee's sitting room. There was an air of privacy and quietness, about this little Mohammedan boudoir, particularly inviting; and while its arrangement promised an unusual degree of comfort, a free circulation of air was insured by its height. Numerous windows of wrought stone work which surround it, afforded the fair inmate a charming view of the sacred mount, and the fine minarets of the neighbouring musjids, towering above the majestic trees which skirt the town...

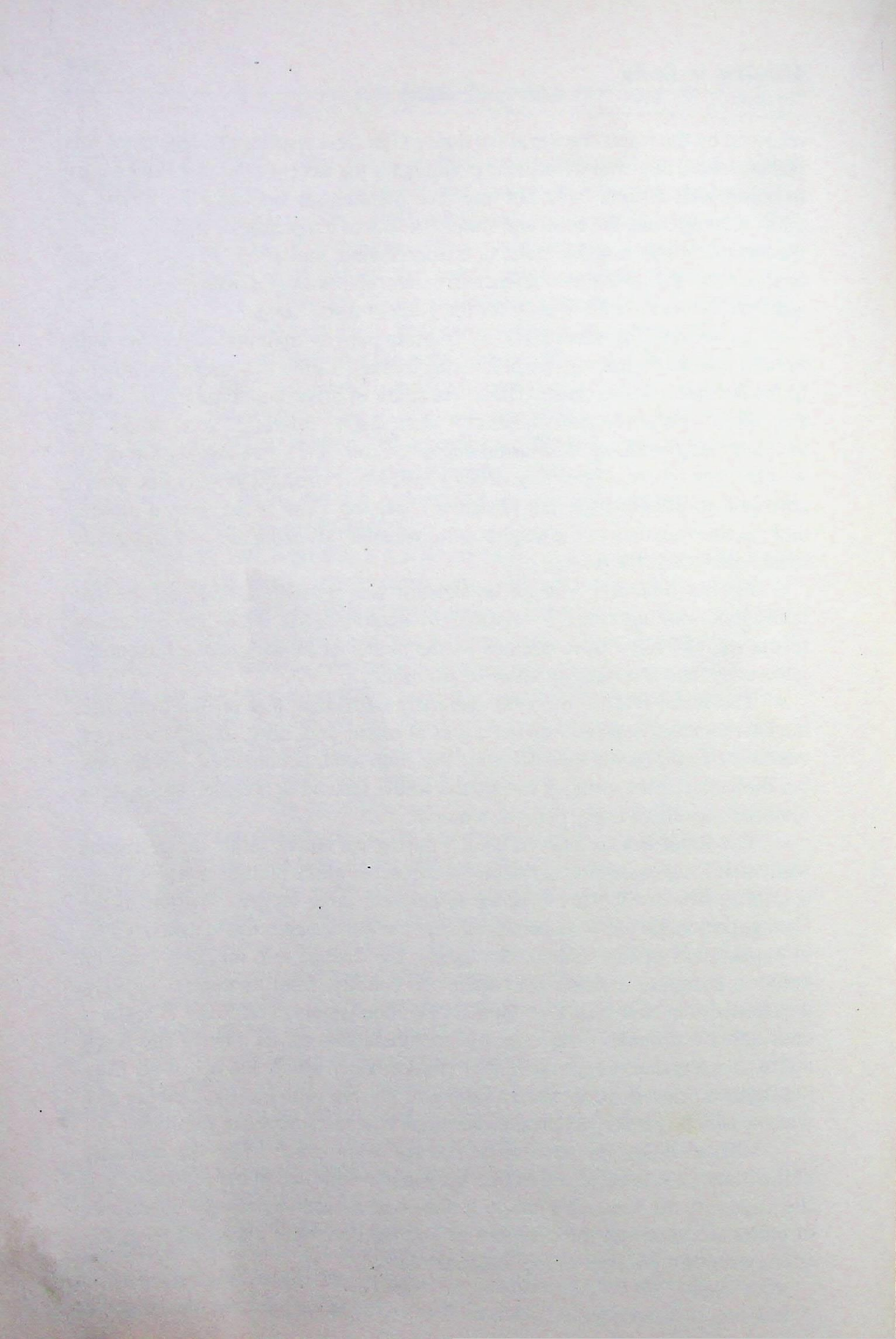
As the Beebee's Mehtah or steward was present, a fine grey-beared intelligent looking man, I ventured to enquire what were her pecuniary resources, as I felt a little anxious on the matter of Mohammedan husbands' generosity, and the weighty affair of pin money.

The Rahit Buckte most unreservedly explained, that on her marriage, the Nuwaub had bestowed on her a *gras* or estate, consisting of eight villages, which she farms on her own account. The chief produce consisted of mangoes, but the value of the villages varied; the whole seemed to average, about three hundred rupees, or thirty pounds, a month.

The Rahit Buckte proved herself during our conversation, to be a good woman of business, quite *au fait* on the subject of grain, plough, mangoe trees, et cetera, from which her revenue is derived; large ledgers, written in the Guzeratee character, were produced, and particular pages readily referred to, in explanation of the subject. Her estate, the Beebee told me, was situated between Junagarh and the sea, where the country, from its natural fertility, was called the Neil Nagir, or land of the blue waters. The Rahit Buckte is considered a miracle of learning by the inhabitants of the harem; she reads and writes Persian, Guzeratee, and Hindostanee, which she acquired from her father's priest or peer, when a little girl. The Nuwaub had married her as a widow, which is a very unusual circumstance in Mohammedan families.

Fully aware of the strict system of seclusion which forms the etiquette of the harem, I was surprised to find her Mehtah admitted to her presence; but she said, with the Nuwaub's family it was usual to receive personal attendants of either sex, but that the servitors of one Beebee, were excluded from the apartments of the rest, if of the forbidden sex....







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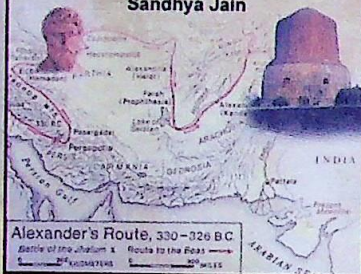


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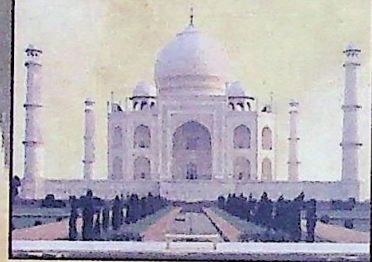
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